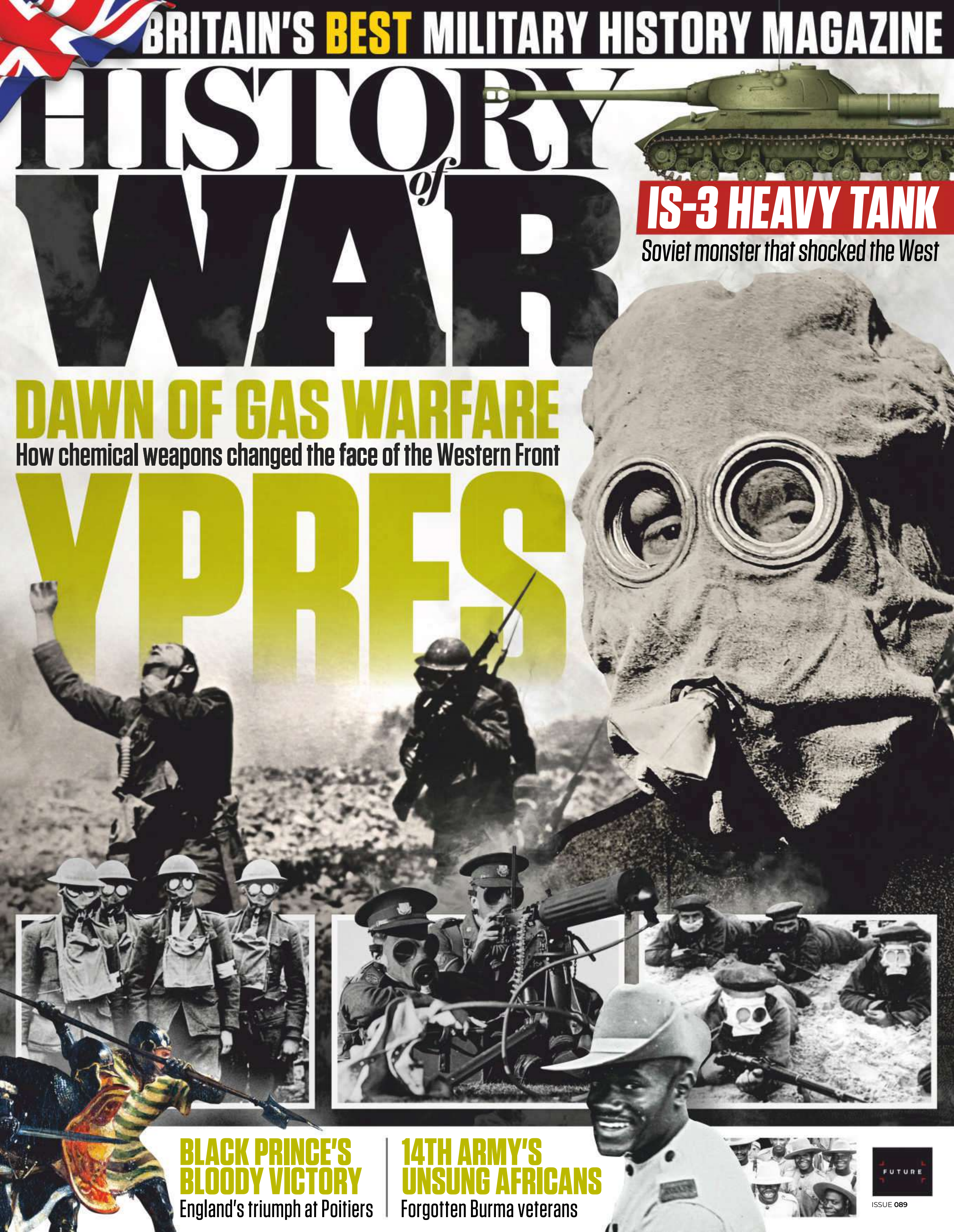




BRITAIN'S **BEST** MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE

HISTORY *of* WAR



IS-3 HEAVY TANK

Soviet monster that shocked the West

DAWN OF GAS WARFARE

How chemical weapons changed the face of the Western Front

YPRES



BLACK PRINCE'S BLOODY VICTORY

England's triumph at Poitiers

14TH ARMY'S UNSUNG AFRICANS

Forgotten Burma veterans



ISSUE 089

KING & COUNTRY

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The ceremony of 'Trooping The Colour' goes all the way back to the reign of King Charles II (1660-1685) when it was decided that this parade would be used to mark the official birthday of the Sovereign.

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British soldiers who have been gassed, awaiting treatment



© Alamy

CONTRIBUTORS



TOM GARNER

This month Tom spoke with Ghanaian WWII veteran Joseph Hammond. Starting on page 32 he discusses his experiences fighting with the 14th Army in Burma, and his charity work to help support African veterans.



MURRAY DAHM

The Battle of Poitiers in 1356 was one of the high-water marks for England during the Hundred Years' War. Over on page 46, Murray recounts how the Black Prince played his part during this resounding victory.

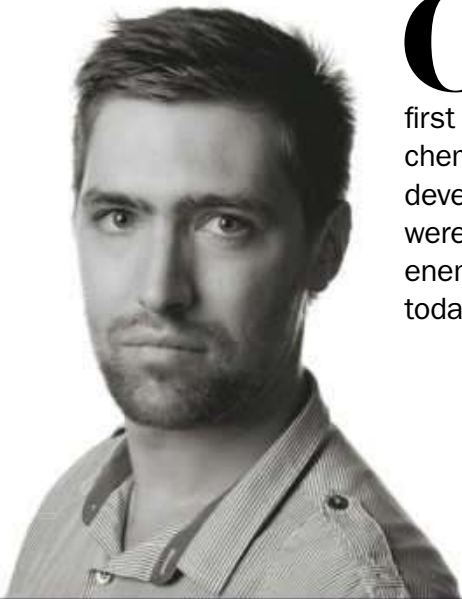


HARETH AL BUSTANI

This issue Hareth recounts the heroic exploits of Thomas Custer, younger brother of the infamous and ill-fated George. He recalls how the younger Custer twice won the Medal of Honor, capturing Confederate colours (p.54).

Welcome

Of all the weapons unleashed during the First World War, the mass deployment of poisonous gas on the Western Front arguably had the most horrific and shocking impact. From the first major use of chlorine gas at Ypres in 1915, these weaponised chemicals literally changed the face of the war, as both sides raced to develop masks to protect their frontline soldiers. At the same time they were creating new terrible concoctions with which to neutralise the enemy. The chilling frontline accounts of this new weapon still resonate today as the world continues to contend with its toxic legacy.



Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

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DAWN OF GAS WARFARE

YPRES

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Two decades of bloody conflict led to the establishment of modern Communist China

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The political and military leaders who guided China's fate on the battlefield and at the negotiating table

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Communist forces turned the tide in Manchuria with a push against Nationalist-held cities

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Temporarily defeated, the Communist Army face a brutal retreat to a safe haven

22 An unlikely alliance

With a common enemy in Imperial Japan, the KMT and Red Army united against the invader



HEROES OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR

54 Thomas Custer captured two Confederate flags to earn two medals for valour



GREAT BATTLES

46 Discover how the Black Prince earned his spurs at the Battle of Poitiers, 1356



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GREAT BATTLES

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This Hundred Years' War clash saw the Black Prince earn his battlefield reputation

HEROES OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR

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Brother of the infamous George, this officer twice won the highest medal for bravery
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Discover how Mary I's reign was almost toppled by an aristocratic uprising

OPERATOR'S HANDBOOK

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This Soviet monster terrified the West after its debut at the 1945 Victory Parade

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A snapshot of the war this month, 80 years ago



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A fascinating reminder of the Tudor king's sizeable girth



- 64 IS-3 Heavy Tank**
Take a look at the Soviet monster that shocked the West





WARⁱⁿ **FOCUS**

POKER FACE

Taken: c.1914-15

Non-commissioned German officers pretend to play cards and drink wine for this humorous postcard photograph. From 1915 gas masks became a permanent sight on both sides of no man's land as the deployment of chemical weapons increased. At first very basic, masks gradually improved from simple cotton-wool strapped around the mouth, to full-face designs with respirator boxes.





WAR_{in}
FOCUS
WATERY GRAVE

Taken: c.1972-3

A wing of an American B-52 bomber lies where it fell, in a residential section of Hanoi, where it was shot down in 1972. In the foreground a women gathers vegetables from the water. The doomed plane was part of Operation Linebacker II, also known as the Christmas Bombings as the mission took place between 18-29 December. There were 729 B-52 sorties, and 15 bombers were lost to enemy fire.





WAR_{in} **FOCUS**

CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED

Taken: c.1930s

A crowd of Hitler Youth give the salute on Hitler Youth Day, Nuremberg. During the annual Nazi rally, a day was dedicated to the Hitlerjugend, who marched in their thousands from across the Reich to take part in the ceremonies. Founded in 1922 and originally called the Jugendbund der NSDAP, an equivalent organisation for girls was later created, called the Bund Deutscher Mädel – League of German Girls.



KMT Soldiers who support President Sun Yat-sen display their machine guns, c.1922. Sun had overthrown the Qing imperial dynasty and was succeeded by Chiang Kai-shek

COMMUNISTS AND NATIONALISTS

The Republic of China is increasingly politically split between the Kuomintang (KMT) Nationalist government, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), regional warlords and the original republican Beiyang Government. However, the KMT and CCP initially cooperate with the assistance of the Soviet Union in an attempt to unify the country.

TIMELINE OF THE...

CHINESE CIVIL WAR

China tears itself apart over two decades in a bloody conflict that leads to the establishment of the modern Communist government, as well as the creation of an independent Taiwan

1920s

9 July 1926-29 December 1928

12 April 1927

1927-37

NORTHERN EXPEDITION

KMT Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek leads a military expedition against the Beiyang Government and warlords in order to unify China. The KMT takes control of the whole country, with Chiang proclaiming his aim to "build an independent, free nation".



© Getty

Nationalist soldiers guard a pile of weapons after the KMT capture of Shanghai

SHANGHAI MASSACRE 01

Chiang Kai-shek and conservatives within the KMT conduct a violent suppression of CCP organisations in Shanghai. Thousands of Communists are killed and cooperation between the CCP and KMT ends. The Chinese Civil War begins when the CCP launches several uprisings to regain power.

Gunmen shoot at windows near Station Square, Shanghai



© Getty

TEN-YEAR CIVIL WAR

China descends into a decade-long period of civil strife between the CCP and KMT. The Nationalists launch several German-inspired encirclement campaigns aimed at destroying the burgeoning Communist People's Liberation Army (PLA). The first four campaigns fail but the fifth succeeds with help from Nazi Germany.

KMT soldiers swear an oath to Chiang Kai-shek, c.1930



© Getty



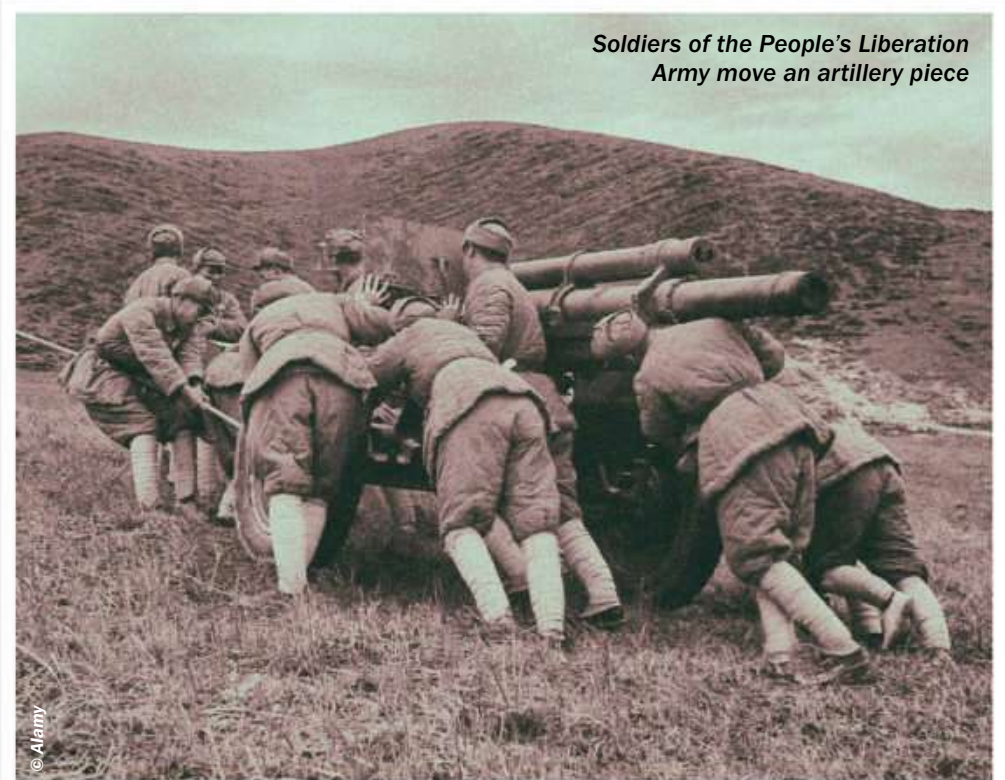
Luding Bridge became an important propaganda event for the CCP and the story of the battle is taught in Chinese elementary schools

BATTLE OF LUDING BRIDGE 02

A key moment of the Long March, Luding Bridge is a 100-metre-long structure made of chains and wooden planks. It's the only reliable crossing over the Dadu River in any direction for hundreds of kilometres. Just 22 PLA soldiers cross the bridge and defeat the pro-KMT forces on the other side under heavy fire. Their success allows the PLA to cross by 2 June 1935.

CHINESE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

The CCP and KMT resume the Civil War after defeating the Japanese. Although the KMT has greater material, numerical and territorial strength, the CCP has many secret headquarters built in former Japanese-occupied territories during WWII. The Soviet Union gives aid to the Communists while the United States assists the Nationalists.



Soldiers of the People's Liberation Army move an artillery piece

16 October 1934-22 October 1935

29 May 1935

1937-45

1945-50

Mao Zedong pictured during the Long March



THE LONG MARCH

PLA forces conduct an epic withdrawal from southeast to northwest China. Consisting of 100,000 soldiers and led by Mao Zedong, the Communists travel 6,000 miles (9,600 kilometres) over mountains and rivers. Approximately 26,000 survive the journey to reach Yan'an and the march establishes Mao as the effective leader of the CCP.

SINO-JAPANESE WAR

Japan invades China, which forces the CCP to join the KMT in an uneasy alliance to defeat the invaders. The conflict becomes part of WWII, with Japan capturing many parts of the country. Tens of millions die and the Japanese win major victories, but China eventually regains all of its lost territories.



Japanese infantrymen fire at a town close to Wuhan, Hubei Province, October 1938



1945-49

OPERATION BELEAGUER

Fifty-thousand American troops fight Communist forces during the revolution while they repatriate over 600,000 Japanese and Koreans following WWII. The USA is markedly less successful at negotiating a peace treaty between the KMT and CCP.



American soldiers march through Qingdao, Shandong Province, c.1948

10-20 October 1946

BATTLE OF KALGAN 03

Nationalist forces besiege the Communists during a mediatory ceasefire between the KMT and CCP. The Nationalists take the city of Kalgan, which is symbolically important for the CCP, and destroy it. This action is regarded as a political mistake by the KMT.



Students evacuate Kalgan during the battle

LIAOSHEN CAMPAIGN 04

The Communists launch the first of three campaigns against the Nationalists. Numerous defeats are inflicted on the Nationalists and northeast China is captured. It's the first time that the Communists have a strategic numerical advantage over the KMT.

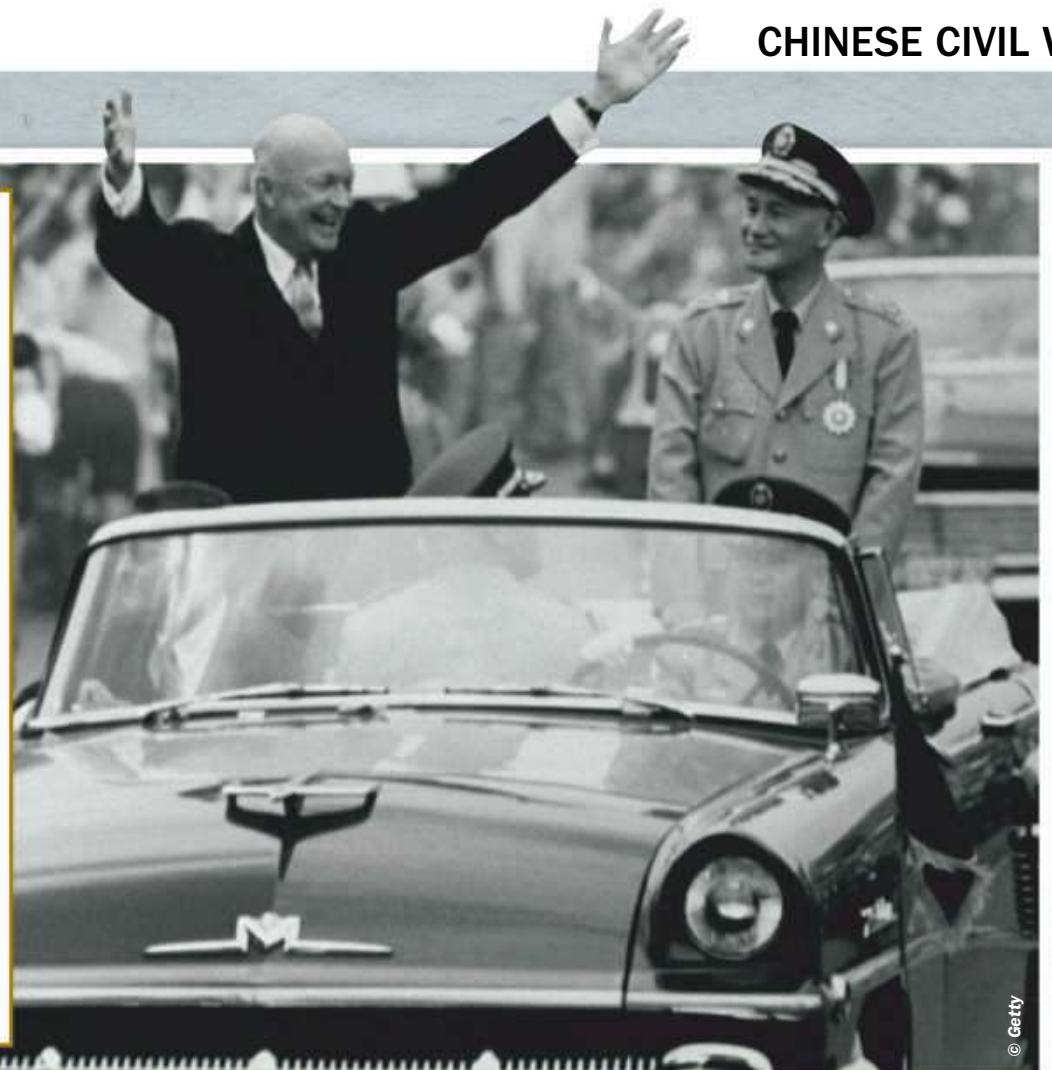


Communist Type 97 Chi-Ha tanks advance into Shenyang during the Liaoshen Campaign

THE GREAT RETREAT 07

The remnants of the KMT's government and armed forces retreat to the island of Taiwan. This includes approximately two million soldiers and many refugees. The measure is only meant to be temporary but Chiang Kai-shek turns Taiwan into a country independent from the Chinese mainland. It officially remains the last bastion of the original Republic of China.

Taiwan's economy grows and its American support is cemented when President Dwight D. Eisenhower visits President Chiang Kai-shek in 1960



This image and right: The People's Liberation Army enters Beijing

PINGJIN CAMPAIGN 06

Over 64 days, Communist forces end Nationalist dominance in the North China Plain. This vast territory eventually comes under CCP control and includes the KMT surrender of Beiping (Beijing) and Tianjin.



12 September-2 November 1948

6 November 1948-10 January 1949

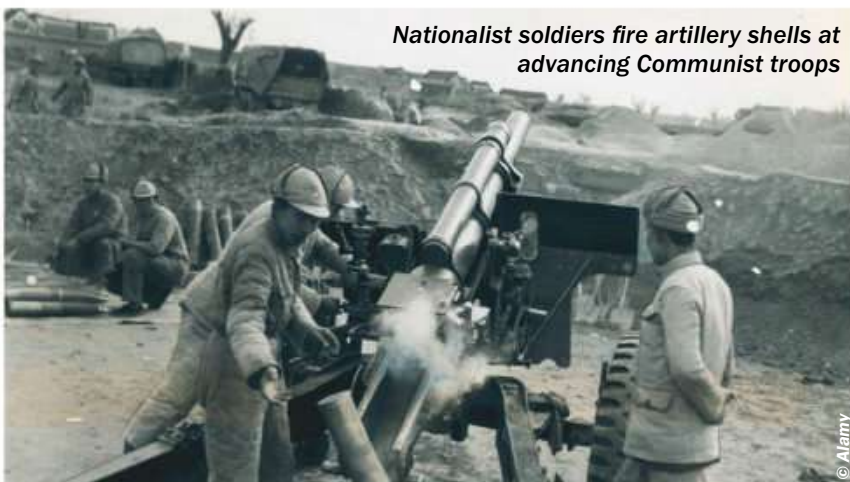
1 October 1949

December 1949

29 November 1948-31 January 1949

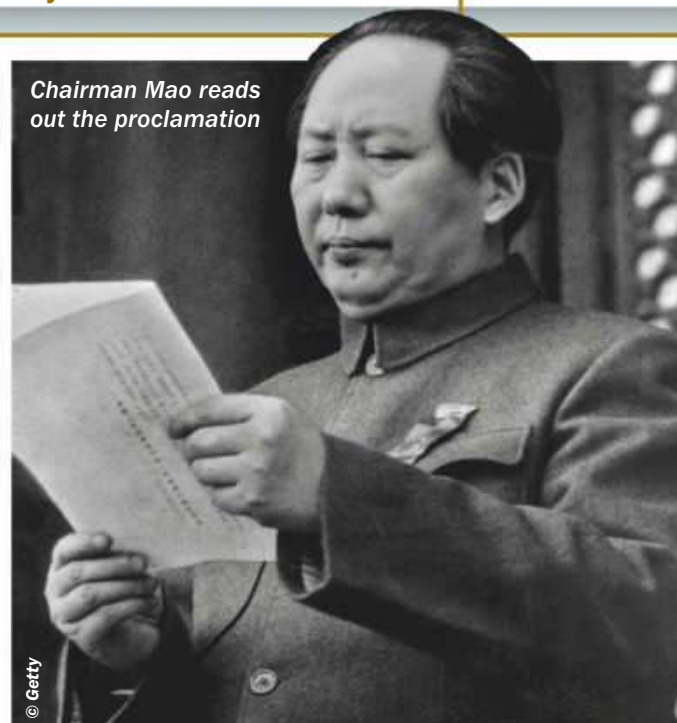
HUAIHAI CAMPAIGN 05

A major Communist offensive is launched against the KMT's headquarters in the city of Xuzhou. The city falls after being encircled and the Communists occupy the territories north of the Yangtze River.



Nationalist soldiers fire artillery shells at advancing Communist troops

Chairman Mao reads out the proclamation



COMMUNIST VICTORY

Mao Zedong, who is now the Chairman of the CCP, announces the proclamation of the new People's Republic of China in Tiananmen Square. Beiping replaces Nanking as the Chinese capital. The proclamation is followed by the very first public military parade of the PLA and a new Chinese flag is officially unveiled.

LEADERS & COMMANDERS

Politicians, ideologues and military commanders all played a crucial role in the struggle to determine China's future



ZHOU ENLAI
AN INDISPENSABLE
COUNSELLOR AND MINISTER,
ZHOU WAS THE RIGHT-HAND
MAN OF MAO
1898-1976 PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Perhaps no member of the Communist Party was as astute and versatile as Zhou Enlai, an intellectual and professional soldier who handled the thorniest problems besetting the Red Army. Like Zhu De, he served for a brief period in the Whampoa Military Academy that was established with the help of foreign advisers. This same institution became Chiang Kai-shek's springboard to power in the mid-1920s. After the Kuomintang's (KMT) violent purge of communist sympathizers Zhou defected and joined Mao in the thriving Jiangxi Soviet that resisted the KMT's annihilation campaigns in the 1930s. Having survived the Long March, Zhou's role only grew under Mao's direction. He was both adviser and diplomat and enjoyed the respect of the KMT's own generals. When the communists finally won the civil war in 1949 Zhou was elevated to the premiership of China. This made his role comparable to a Prime Minister serving in the cabinet of a lifelong autocrat – that is, Chairman Mao. Unfortunately, even Zhou's adroit diplomatic skills and intellect could not avert the economic and social disasters caused by Mao's tyranny in the following decades.

MAO TSE-TUNG
ZEALOUS AND UNYIELDING,
THE FUTURE RULER OF CHINA
WAS A FIGUREHEAD FOR
A STRUGGLING REBELLION
1893-1976 PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

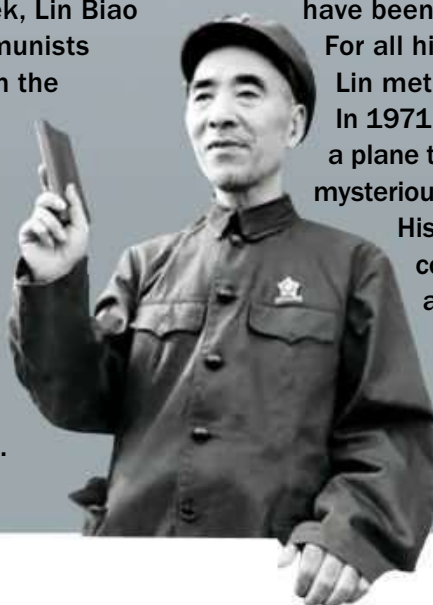
With little practical experience in subversive activities before he joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1921, Mao endured failure after failure trying to further the cause. A measured success came about with the founding of the Jiangxi Soviet in 1931, but this remote enclave was abandoned in October 1934 as his besieged army started their Long March to escape certain annihilation. The lasting impact of this shambolic retreat that almost wiped out the Red Army was to elevate Mao's leadership over the entire Communist Party and buy them valuable time. Being surrounded by capable advisors and colleagues was one of Mao's understated advantages.



In Zhu De and Lin Biao he had unquestioning commanders who imparted valuable knowledge on all aspects of warfare. Mao's own writings on the topic may be authoritative but he would not have achieved this without the hardships and bloody lessons gleaned from decades spent fighting – and mostly evading – Chiang's nationalists. When the Communist Party won the civil war in 1949 a huge geopolitical shift occurred with Mao as its architect. Of course, in the ensuing decades he orchestrated failed policies such as the Great Leap Forward that led to famine and economic stagnation.

LIN BIAO
ARCHITECT OF CHAIRMAN
MAO'S PERSONALITY CULT, HIS
DEATH BECAME A LONG-KEPT
COMMUNIST PARTY SECRET
1907-71 PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Another alumnus of Whampoa Military Academy who served under Chiang Kai-shek, Lin Biao defected to the communists in 1927 and served in the Jiangxi Soviet. His war record during the next 20 years was impeccable. It was his leadership of the 8th Route Army that allowed it to scale up with Soviet assistance in the years 1945-49.



When the communists won the civil war the PLA's numbers had swelled to millions and short conquests of Tibet and Xinjiang ensued, further increasing China's territory. Lin became very close to Chairman Mao in the 1950s and was considered a sycophant by detractors in the Communist Party. The 'little red book' titled The Quotations of Chairman Mao was a massive propaganda campaign believed to have been engineered by Lin.

For all his talent and loyalty, Lin met an ignominious end. In 1971 he fled China aboard a plane that disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

His role in an aborted coup against the aging Chairman Mao was believed to be the reason for his attempted escape.



ZHU DE
A SKILLED GENERAL, IT WAS
HIS STEADY AND DEPENDABLE
LEADERSHIP THAT PRESERVED
THE RED ARMY
1886-1976 PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Were it not for Zhu De's professionalism and fortitude, Mao's attempts at founding a soviet enclave in the Jinggangshan wilderness would have failed. It was Zhu De, who was serving as an instructor at the prestigious Whampoa Military Academy, who led the failed putschists in Nanchang on an arduous march towards Jiangxi, where he knew a fledgling communist encampment was growing. If Mao and Zhu had not become partners, with the latter subordinate to the former, then the Chinese Red Army would not have formed. Mao, unlike Zhu, never had any formal military training aside from a brief spell of conscription. Zhu's conduct during the KMT's annihilation campaigns and the Long March were just as exemplary. His character was indomitable and his thinking always clear-headed even when danger was close by. In the first months of the Long March, which lasted from October 1934 until October 1935, the continuous battles and aerial bombardments killed more than half of the Red Army. That Zhu and other commanders survived is miraculous. Mao's loyal general is now memorialized among the 'Ten Great Marshals of the PLA'.



DENG XIAOPING

A MINOR FIGURE IN THE RED ARMY, DENG'S EVENTUAL RISE TO POWER LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN CHINA
1904-1997
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Few members of the Communist Party served the cause with as much devotion and fervour as Deng Xiaoping, who joined at 23 and began organising cadres to establish soviets, or self-sufficient enclaves. Like the rest of his compatriots in the Red Army he was toughened by the years spent battling the KMT and the struggle against Japan. Deng survived the Long March and the decade spent in the canyons of Shaanxi under Mao Tse-tung until the communists finally won the civil war in 1949. A cruel fate awaited Deng and his family in the turbulent 1960s when he ran afoul of the Cultural Revolution. Stripped of his title and condemned to hard labour, Deng toiled for years in a government factory before he was rehabilitated and forced back into national politics. Deng is revered in China today as a reforming leader who mended ties with the United States in the late-1970s. It is Deng's success at 'opening up' China's economy that is further celebrated rather than his role in enforcing the violent crackdown on pro-democracy activists in 1989. When he passed away in 1997 his legacy was enshrined in the Chinese Communist Party's annals.

PENG DEHUI

WITH A REPUTATION AS A GREAT MARSHAL, PENG DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF THROUGH 25 YEARS OF WAR
1898-1974
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Peng was another Red Army stalwart who remained loyal through crushing defeat and desperate losses. Possessing the same taciturn resolve and unquestioning obedience of his superior, Zhu De, his later career was spent moulding the PLA into the world's largest military. Having joined the communists in his youth, it was not until the Second Sino-Japanese War that he rose to prominence. With Mao agreeing to a nominal alliance with the KMT, Peng was a deputy commander who saw extensive combat against the Japanese in northwest China. After the civil war that was concluded in 1949 Peng was next involved with commanding China's overwhelming response to the UN and South Korean forces that had overrun North Korea. The years of attrition along the 48th parallel may have killed as many as three



million Chinese soldiers but it also showed the tenacity and discipline of the PLA under its commanders. Before he was ostracized during the Cultural Revolution, Peng's main preoccupation was the establishment of clandestine factories and infrastructure in China's 'third front'.

CHIANG KAI-SHEK

AN UNRELIABLE ALLY AT BEST AND A DITHERING STRONGMAN, CHIANG'S INDECISIVENESS COST HIM HIS COUNTRY
1887-1975
REPUBLIC OF CHINA



A true son of the 1911 revolution that swept away the ailing Qing Dynasty, Chiang was an ardent soldier but a poor strategist. His close relationship with China's great modernising patriot, Dr Sun Yat-sen, elevated him to the upper echelons of the KMT. By the time he adopted the title Generalissimo and launched the Northern Expedition to subdue China's stubborn warlords, Chiang was the toast of the world. The Soviet Union, rather than the United States, was his most eager benefactor at the time; before he married, Chiang received training from both Japan and the Soviet Union. But the dismal results of the Northern Expedition revealed his less-stellar qualities. When faced with daunting adversity Chiang always found the best course was a sudden escape – he exiled himself to Japan in 1927 for a respite, leaving his homeland without a head of state until his return. While he proved a staunch opponent of the communists, whose numbers he decimated with annihilation campaigns from 1930 until 1935, the same willingness to abandon a lost cause drove him away from the Chinese mainland in 1949. Chiang spent the rest of his life as Taiwan's resident dictator, his wish to reconquer the mainland unfulfilled.



GENERAL GEORGE C MARSHALL

THE WWII GENERAL FAILED TO CRAFT A VIABLE STRATEGY FOR ASIA IN THE POST-WAR ORDER
1880-1959
USA

Unlike other great powers, the United States never had cruel designs on China other than to secure a dependable Asian ally. But this modest role grew problematic in WWII as President Roosevelt and then President Truman could not fully commit to the KMT with vast quantities of material when the European theatre was the Allies' priority. After the defeat of Japan the renowned General Marshall, already celebrated as a visionary and hero, was given a delicate assignment by Truman: to go to China and forge a lasting peace between the communists and the nationalists. Backing up Marshall's presence were 100,000 advisers, technicians, and marines tasked with keeping the peace. The Soviets, on the other hand, having entrenched themselves in Manchuria, were seen as spoilers who may or may not encourage the communists to attack. To thwart this possibility, Marshall was in personal contact with Mao or liaising via Zhou Enlai. Despite his best efforts and the open support of Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist Party's own leadership, Marshall could not build a coalition government in China and when he departed in 1947 the civil war ran its inevitable course.

LIAOSHEN CAMPAIGN

Communist forces turned the tide of the war in Manchuria with a determined push against Nationalist-held cities

Although the war had been raging since 1927, a decisive moment was not achieved for decades. The fight between Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) Nationalists and Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party had been put on hold by the Sino-Japanese War (WWII) but after the Japanese invaders were finally defeated hostilities immediately resumed. This new period of the Civil War would latterly be known as the Chinese Communist Revolution and Mao's People's Liberation Army (PLA) was far more successful against the KMT than it had been in the 1930s.

The Communists believed that the key to overthrowing the KMT national government lay in first seizing control of the northeast region of Manchuria. Manchuria was China's most industrialised area and had been under Soviet control in the immediate aftermath of WWII. The Soviets had withdrawn in 1946

and both the KMT and PLA began to increase their presence in the region. For the first time since the Civil War began, the Communists' operational strength in Manchuria was greater than the KMT.

By spring 1948, the Nationalists in Manchuria only controlled three major cities in the region: Changchun, Jinzhou and Shenyang. The commander of the PLA Northeast Field Army, Lin Biao, believed the northernmost city of Changchun should be captured first but the Communist High Command – including Mao – disagreed. Mao reluctantly agreed to Lin's request to advance on Changchun in the summer of 1948 but the attack was a failure.

A new Communist strategy was subsequently developed where the PLA would take Jinzhou and also ambush KMT reinforcements from Shenyang. Meanwhile, another PLA army aimed to block a KMT force in Beijing from assisting their Nationalist

counterparts in Manchuria. The plan was well conceived but the Communists were also taking a huge gamble because Lin only had enough supplies to attack but not withdraw. A PLA defeat would mean abandoning tanks and artillery, so in many ways the war hinged on what would become known as the 'Liaoshen Campaign'.

Nationalist rout

Beginning on 12 September 1948, the first Communist campaign target was Jinzhou where they aimed to cut off KMT rail supplies. The Nationalists tried to relieve Jinzhou's besieged garrison from both the east and west by land, air and sea. However, they were unable to relieve the city and Jinzhou fell on 15 October with almost 100,000 KMT casualties. This heavy defeat directly led to the surrender of Changchun on 19 October when its dispirited garrison defected to the Communists.

Communist commanders of the 5th South China Sea Brigade study combat plans in preparation for the upcoming campaign, September 1948



PLA troops charge towards the walls of Jinzhou under the cover of heavy artillery fire



© Alamy

With these two defeats, Chiang Kai-shek himself travelled to Manchuria in an attempt to encircle the PLA. While he was advancing, another KMT commander – Liao Yaoxiang – was defeated and captured at the Battle of Heishan on 21 October. This engagement saw 25,000 Nationalist soldiers killed and Chiang was forced to retreat to Huludao and evacuate his own army to the coastal city of Tianjin.

The PLA proceeded to encircle Shenyang on 29 October. KMT discipline in the city soon collapsed when the Nationalist commander fled by plane the next day. A PLA assault occurred on 1 November and the garrison of 140,000 men surrendered. With the fall of the three KMT Manchurian cities, the port of Yingkou was captured and Communist control of northeast China was secured.

The Liaoshen Campaign had been extremely costly, with the PLA inflicting 472,000 casualties on the KMT compared to 65,000 of their own. It was also a decisive moment in the progress of the Civil War. Although the Nationalists were not completely defeated at this stage, Chiang had lost some of his best armies and Communist control of Manchuria deprived him of its rich industrial and natural resources. The campaign also introduced the PLA for the first time as a conventional army with its coordinated strategies, use of heavy armour and artillery, as well as large-scale attacks against defended cities.

The main result of Liaoshen was that the KMT never fully recovered from this defeat. It would take less than a year from the fall of Shenyang to Mao proclaiming the Communist People's Republic of China in Beijing. Chiang's once-powerful Nationalists were forced to retreat into permanent exile in Taiwan.

TYPE 97 CHI-HA

The main tank of the People's Liberation Army was actually Japanese but played a leading role in the Communist victory against the Kuomintang

Designed in 1936, the Type 97 Chi-Ha was a Japanese medium tank. Powered by a Mitsubishi engine with a 57mm main gun, the Chi-Ha was widely produced and extensively used by the Imperial Japanese Army during WWII. Its upgraded version was the Shinhoto Chi-Ha, which had an enlarged turret. Although it had a smaller 47mm main gun, the Shinhoto had a higher velocity than the original Chi-Ha. Shinhoto Chi-Has were considered to be the best Japanese medium tank of WWII, although they could not compete with their American Sherman counterparts.

At the end of WWII, many Shinhotos and original Chi-Has were captured by Soviet forces, who then turned them over to the PLA for the resumed Chinese Civil War. The first of these tanks was actually independently captured by the PLA in 1945 and designated as '102'. During the Battle of Jinzhou in October 1948, 102 led a successful charge of over a dozen Communist tanks against KMT positions. For its performance, the vehicle was officially renamed 'Gongchen' ('Heroic Tank') and went on to lead the PLA victory parade in Tiananmen Square on 1 October 1949.

It's estimated that most of the PLA's approximately 100 Chi-Ha tanks served in Manchuria rather than in other campaigns. However, by the time the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949 the PLA possibly had almost 350 in service.

The 'Gongchen' Type 97 Shinhoto Chi-Ha pictured with its commander flying the new flag of the People's Republic of China

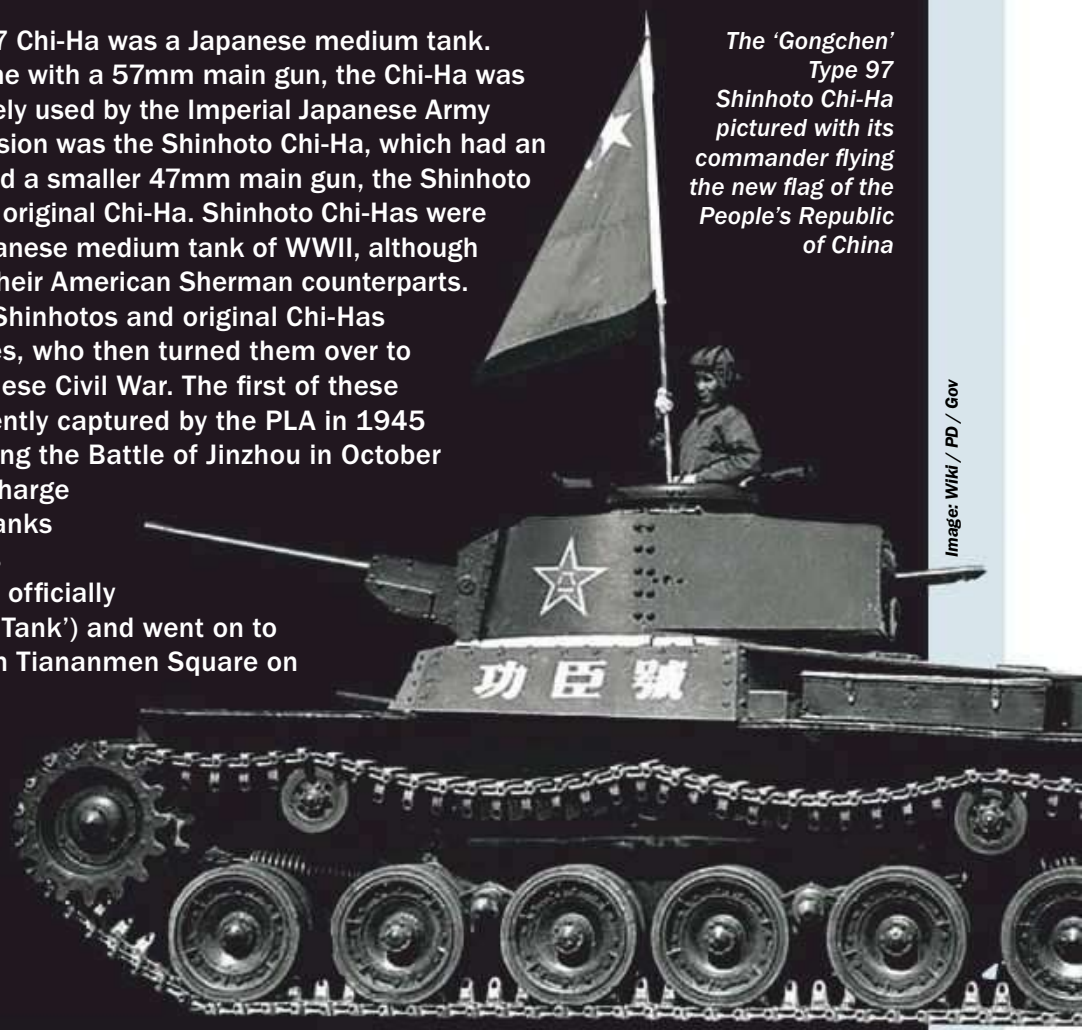


Image: Wiki / PD / Gov

As if the jungles of southern China were not hazardous enough, the Long March's winding course brought the communists to the Tibetan plateau, where cold and scarce food supplies imposed more hardship

THE LONG MARCH

Encircled and facing total defeat by the Kuomintang, China's communists launched a daring breakout to find a safe haven. The year-long exodus decimated Mao's rebels but saved their revolution

Contrary to its lofty goals, China's fledgling Communist Party had little support in the provinces where most of the rural population lived. Founded by a group of conspirators in Shanghai in 1921, the party's resources were insufficient for challenging the Kuomintang (KMT). As a compromise of sorts, many active communists joined the government and paid lip service to China's republican aspirations. When Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek sent his armed forces (half-a-million strong and built with German and Soviet assistance) on the Northern Expedition to crush provincial warlords, the communists began organizing soviets. They were intended to serve as springboards for a broader revolutionary movement later on – that is, if the soviets succeeded.

The debacle of its anti-warlord campaigns did give much needed experience to the KMT's armed forces, the National Revolutionary Army (NRA). However in 1927 a ruthless purge of suspected communists within the government triggered an open revolt against the KMT. In the city of Nanchang officers serving in the NRA organised a putsch with help from local anarchists, but their success was short-lived. In a daring escape involving thousands of defectors, a young officer named Zhu De broke through the KMT's blockade and marched toward the Jiangxi Soviet, a small enclave controlled by the agitator Mao Tse-tung. Although a well-known veteran of the communist underground, Mao had few successes to his name and his previous efforts at rousing local peasants had failed. But in the remote hilltop of Jinggangshan, in the borderlands of Fujian, he proved his leadership by recruiting local bandits and peasants to the cause. The arrival of Zhu De's rebels was another boost, swelling their numbers to a few thousand.

As the Jiangxi Soviet expanded, the growing Red Army established printing presses and workshops to support itself. Villages within its control were 'collectivised', with landlords driven away and farms redistributed among the peasants, each community raising its own militia for self defence. Within five years the Jiangxi Soviet, being just two weeks' march from Shanghai, was considered a threat to the KMT. Bristling with modern arms supplied by Britain, France and Germany, Chiang personally directed the annihilation campaigns to eradicate the Jiangxi Soviet. These failed in quick succession as the terrain and local sympathies for the Red Army worked against the KMT troops. The Red Army's commanders gained experience and honed their prowess in waging irregular warfare, and Mao himself summed this up in his timeless maxim: "When the enemy advances we retreat, when the enemy retreats we advance."

"WHEN THE ENEMY ADVANCES WE RETREAT, WHEN THE ENEMY RETREATS WE ADVANCE"

In late-1934, however, the KMT's foreign-trained air force and a new strategy of breaking through defensive lines with rings of machine gun nests gave their fifth and last annihilation campaign unstoppable momentum. Facing complete encirclement and a long siege, the Red Army's junior commanders led their troops out of the battle area and started the long exodus that was later immortalised by the Communist Party. However, the decision to embark on the Long March was never made by a single

person, not even Mao himself; it was a matter of expediency when the Red Army faced total defeat. Within days, 100,000 Red Army troops and their pack animals had slipped through the NRA lines and headed west. By the time the vast column reached Guizhou with the NRA in hot pursuit, a fifth of their number had been killed. The jungles and valleys of Yunnan were a quagmire that further decimated the Red Army. According to the British author Robert Payne, who lived in China during WWII, only 300 women participated in this chaotic and aimless retreat and less than a dozen of them survived. Even Mao's heavily pregnant young wife suffered serious shrapnel wounds from an airstrike. Three of Mao's five children were eventually abandoned during the march.

The dramatic capture by courageous volunteers of the suspension bridge over Luting Gorge is held up as an example of the Long March's heroism, but the Red Army's greatest difficulties occurred after it had evaded the KMT and reached the Tibetan plateau and the marshes of Gansu. Here, physical exhaustion and hostile tribes inflicted more deaths.

By the time Mao and his inner circle reached the canyons of Yanan in Shaanxi towards the end of 1935 they had trekked 13,000km (8,078 miles) by foot and withstood unimaginable privation and illness. When seen as a moral victory the Long March does show Mao's own personal qualities in a good light: he was steadfast and resolute in the face of certain defeat. But from a military perspective the Long March loses its dramatic allure and resembles a disorderly withdrawal spread over a year. Perhaps the greatest lesson of the Long March is that it tested the Red Army's will even when its communist leadership was never certain they would reach safety.

Left: Mao Tse-tung is pictured next to Zhu De, his ablest commander, in the final years of the civil war. Superbly educated and tough as nails, Zhu De was instrumental in organising the Chinese Red Army

Below: This vivid painting that commemorates the 'triumph' of the Long March shows Mao and his inner circle welcomed by cheering crowds as they arrive in Shaanxi. In reality it was a haphazard tactical retreat that cost thousands of lives



AN UNLIKELY ALLIANCE

When Imperial Japan invaded China in 1937 it brought about the near total defeat of the KMT. Desperate for allies, a ceasefire with the Red Army trapped in Shaanxi made them a second front against the Japanese

A decade of relentless warfare waged by Chiang Kai-shek's KMT had all but dashed the Communist Party's hopes of seizing power. By 1935 the retreat from their mountain hideaway in the south ended and the communists, now firmly under Mao Tse-tung's leadership, were trapped in the arid canyons of Shaanxi, their manpower and weapons almost depleted.

Further territorial expansion was futile since the KMT, with the support of its German advisors, controlled the outlying cities and had an air force to quash the Red Army's movements. An enduring myth fostered by the Communist Party decades later was the

unfailing support of the rural farmers in these hard years. While it is true that fresh recruits flocked to the remote territory they held, until the 1950s the Communist Party was full of what Mao Tse-tung described as "bourgeoisie" ideologues who attended university and came from merchant families. The founders of the Communist Party were subversive intellectuals determined to restore China's prestige, and those in Mao's inner circle such as Zhou Enlai were known for their broad erudition and urbane manners. Mao himself was a dilettante and part-time lecturer in his youth whose true lifelong passion was classic Chinese literature.

The stalemate between the Communist Party and the KMT was short-lived, however,

with Japan determined to fulfil its hegemonic ambitions. Since 1895, when it wrested the island of Formosa from the crumbling Qing Dynasty, Japan's appetite for overseas territory had grown stronger. After the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 the entire Korean peninsula came under Japan's dominion and a huge project was soon underway to develop the territory of Manchuria into an industrial base. In 1937, with militarists having subverted Japan's democracy the year before, a false flag operation in the former imperial capital Peking was used to justify a full-scale assault on Shanghai, which was the most prosperous city in China. This marked the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War and led to the tragic events in

The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) was a humanitarian and social catastrophe. As many as 25 million Chinese may have perished



Nanking, the KMT's capital that was abandoned to the advancing Japanese army, where as many as 300,000 civilians were massacred.

With the KMT's armed forces in disarray and swathes of territory lost to Japan, the Communist Party accepted a ceasefire and reorganised the Red Army into the Eighth Route Army. Other minor soviet enclaves in central China were reorganised as well into the New Fourth Army, which was subsequently attacked by the KMT when it attempted to cross the Yangtze River. In late-1940 the Red Army mobilised to push back the Japanese, who were encroaching on their lines, in what was later glorified as the 'Hundred Regiments Campaign'. The communists inflicted serious losses on the Japanese but this was hardly pivotal.

Meanwhile, the KMT in WWII was a basket case fully reliant on American-supplied Lend-Lease to keep fighting the war. As the Japanese military was still making territorial gains in 1944 with the destructive Ichi-go campaign that ravaged southern China, Chiang was bickering with his American advisors and oversaw an ineffective government riven with corruption. Always distrustful of the communists, Chiang never allowed his generals to harmonise their operations with the Eighth Route Army and little evidence exists of broad cooperation in what the communists dubbed the 'People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression'. The

“IN THE SAME WEEK HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI WERE INCINERATED BY ATOM BOMBS, THE SOVIET UNION SENT 1.5 MILLION TROOPS INTO MANCHURIA AND SUBDUED THE JAPANESE KWANTUNG ARMY”

Allies' victory in 1945 brought no peace to China, although a conference between Chiang and Mao in August served as a badly needed reset. But the die had been cast.

In the same week that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were incinerated by atom bombs, the Soviet Union sent 1.5 million troops into Manchuria and subdued the Japanese Kwantung Army. Unknown to the KMT,

the Soviet commanders had liaised with the Eighth Route Army and arranged for their transport. Trained and equipped with tons of Japanese weapons, the newly organized People's Liberation Army (PLA) was more than a match for the KMT's two million battle-hardened troops whose shabby logistics prevented them from holding on to China's northernmost cities. After the rout of a million KMT troops and several crossings over the Yangtze River in 1949, a beleaguered Chiang gave orders to relocate the government to the island of Formosa. This was very much in keeping with past decisions, like his sudden self-exile to Japan in 1927 when his campaign against local warlords faltered or his disastrous abandonment of Nanking in 1937, and from this final humiliation Taiwan's statehood has its origin.

To this day the People's Republic of China still considers Taiwan a 'rogue province' that should be under Beijing's authority. This is not surprising given how distrust and bad faith were the original operating principles for the relationship between the Communist Party and the KMT.

The irony of the Chinese Civil War is the meddling by world powers. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union supported the KMT, and by 1945 the USA saw the KMT as indispensable and the Soviets were firmly behind Mao Tse-tung



DAWN OF GAS WARFARE

YPRES

Flesh and blood, iron and timber, synapse and sinew had clashed on the world's battlefields for millennia. On 22 April 1915 the German Army added a new spectre to the killing fields: poison gas

WORDS JONATHAN KRAUSE

Picture posed by U.S. troops, to illustrate the effects of phosgene gas

Maurice Balfourier, general commanding the vaunted XXe or 'Iron' Corps d'Armée, was presented with startling intelligence over a period of weeks in April 1915. His corps was positioned in a salient protecting Ypres, an important centre of the old Flemish domain with roots dating back as far as Rome. There had been warnings that the Germans opposite were preparing to launch a new and devastating chemical weapon upon his troops. On the night of 13/14 April a German deserter by the name of August Jäger of the 243rd Infantry Regiment presented himself to men of Balfourier's 11th (Iron) Division. He confirmed that a chemical attack with chlorine gas was imminent, and even produced his crude gas mask as evidence of his claims. The interrogation was led by General Ferry, commanding the Iron Division, who then passed on his findings to his superior officer, Balfourier.

We do not know exactly where Balfourier was when he made his ultimate decision on the intelligence. Most likely in an office dug out underground, not far from the front. French generals often liked to position themselves close to the front to respond more quickly to changing battlefield conditions. We do, however, know Balfourier's response. He looked at the intelligence sitting before him and brushed it aside in one word: *billevesée*. 'Nonsense'. Major-General Charles Foulkes, the famed British Army expert on gas, also disregarded the evidence of an impending gas attack in the Ypres salient. He mused to himself that even if the intelligence were accurate, that any German attack would fail, and "the gas would be easily dispersed".

The men serving under Balfourier did not quite agree. Ferry took it upon himself to warn the men of the British 28th Division, who served besides him in the Ypres salient. Ferry's attempt to warn his allies

made its way up to Grand Quartier Général (GHQ), the French general headquarters. They were furious that Ferry would take it upon himself to reveal intelligence to the British through informal channels. They told him in no uncertain terms that "a divisional commander has not the right to communicate direct with allied troops but only by the channel through Army Corps". Ferry was devastated, writing later that: "We thus thought that we had done, as quickly as possible, everything necessary to avoid surprise, the effect of terror, and the heavy losses which the Germans counted on inflicting with this new and abominable weapon of war... But, nobody budged... neither at 20th Corps, nor at Army, nor at French GHQ."

"HAGGARD, THEIR OVERCOATS THROWN OFF OR OPENED WIDE, THEIR SCARVES PULLED OFF, RUNNING LIKE MADMEN, DIRECTIONLESS, SHOUTING FOR WATER, SPITTING BLOOD, SOME EVEN ROLLING ON THE GROUND MAKING DESPERATE EFFORTS TO BREATHE"

Colonel Henri Mordacq,
Commander French 90th Brigade

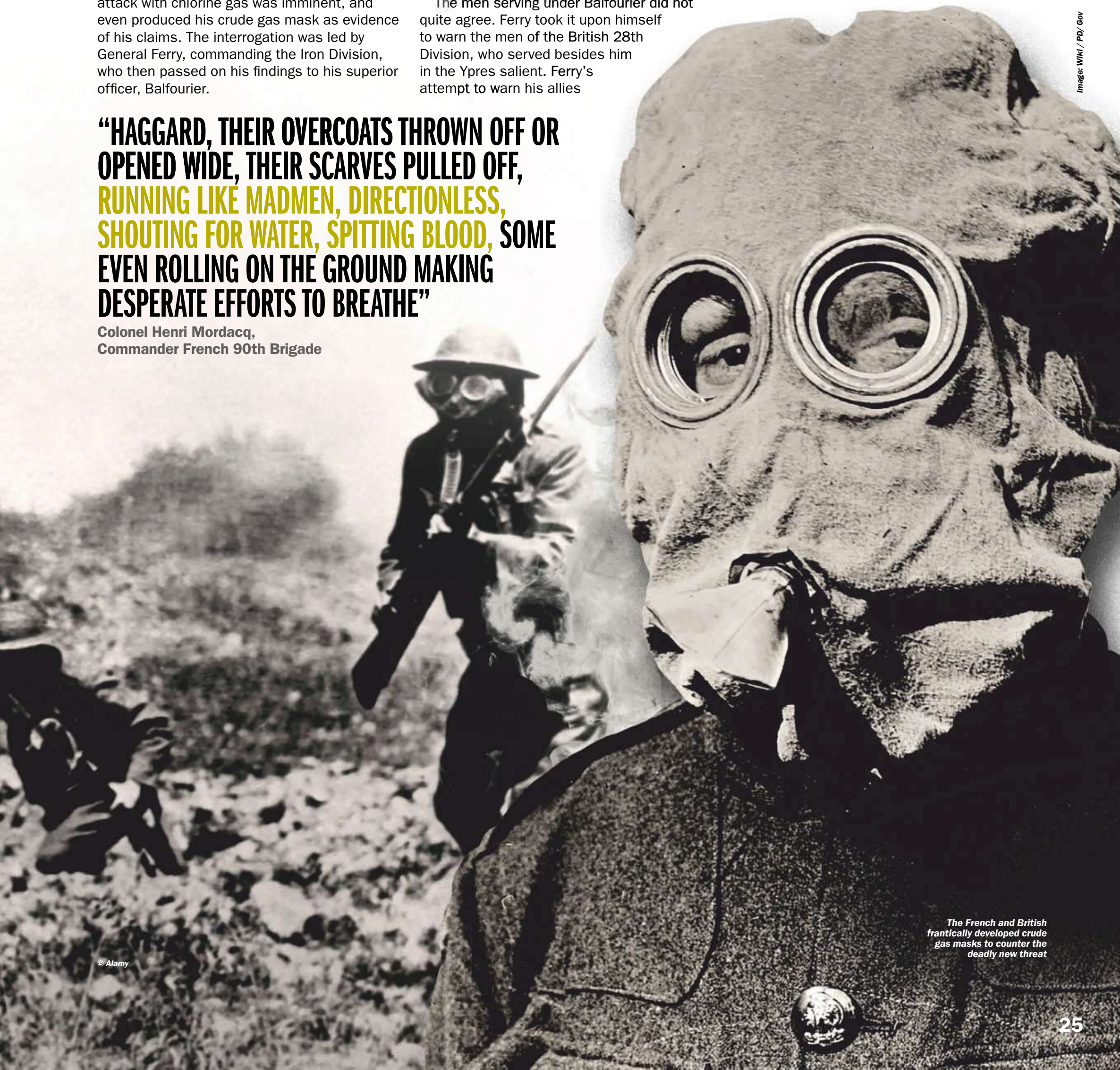


Image: Wiki / PD / Gov

The French and British frantically developed crude gas masks to counter the deadly new threat

DAWN OF GAS WARFARE

For his part, Ferry at least tried to ensure that his own troops were well-prepared. The elite chasseurs of Ferry's 11th Division (11e DI, or Division d'Infanterie) were ordered to do their best to take whatever precautions they could. They fashioned makeshift gas masks for themselves out of whatever spare bits of cotton and cloth they could find. Fortunately for them, they were rotated out of the line a few days before the gas attack on 22 April. They were relieved by colonial troops, a mixture of primarily Algerian and 'Senegalese' (West African) men of the 45e DI under General Quinquandon. The Algerians refused to believe the men of the Iron Division who tried to warn them of the impending gas attack. It is not hard to imagine at least some of them having the exact same response as Balfourier: 'nonsense'. They would very soon come to learn just how wrong they were.

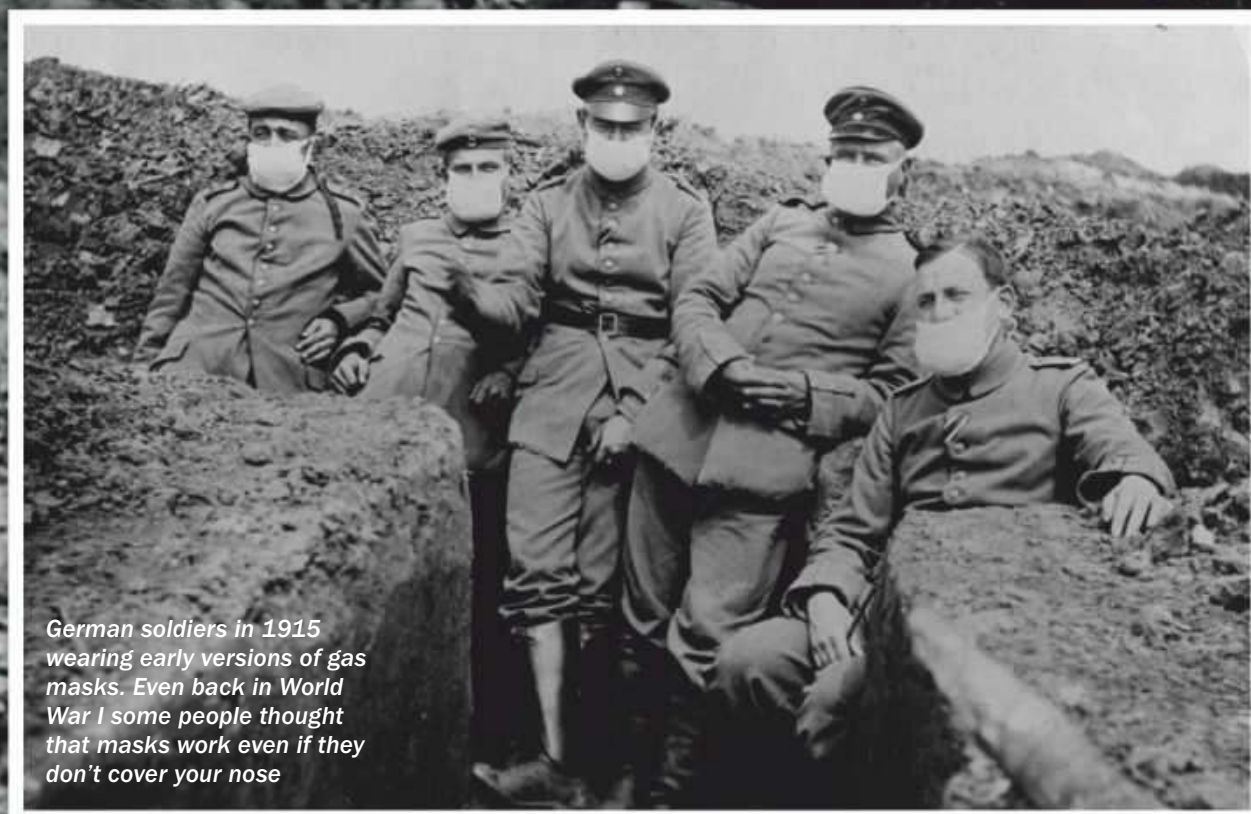
The events of 22 April 1915 are well-known. At 5.00pm that day troops from German Fourth Army unleashed 150 tonnes of chlorine gas, which had been stored in 5,830 pressurized canisters, across a front of some 6.4 kilometres (four miles) in the Ypres salient, stretching from Steetstraat on the Yser Canal to just east of Poelcappelle. The densest clouds wafted over No Man's Land and struck French colonial troops, who fell into a panic. German troops, following 15 minutes later, made rapid progress, capturing Langemarck and Pilckem Ridge in under two hours. According to the journal of German Colonel Peterson, who led part of the attack, many places were taken "without firing even a single rifle shot".

Opposite the advancing Germans, Entente commanders found their troops in a panic.

Colonel Mordacq, commanding the French 90th Brigade, noted that the first telephone messages he received after the attack were from "deranged" officers. At first, he didn't know what to make of them. When, soon after, he saw men fleeing in panic he understood what they were up against. His description of events is famous, but worth repeating. He saw men that were "haggard, their overcoats thrown off or opened wide, their scarves pulled off, running like madmen, directionless, shouting for water, spitting blood, some even rolling on the ground making desperate efforts to breathe". This was an attack like no other.

Speaking before the commission assembled to analyse the devastating attacks in May 1915, Lt Jules-Henri Guntzberger recalled that: "On 22 April around 17.00 [I was] 70 or 80 metres from the forward German trenches... I saw a green cloud, some ten metres high, and particularly thick at the base, where it touched the ground. This cloud advanced towards us, pushed by the wind. Almost immediately we were literally suffocated... At that moment I saw many men fall, some of them got back up, starting walking again, only to fall again, until we finally arrived back at the second line of trenches, behind the canal."

"I SAW A GREEN CLOUD, SOME TEN METRES HIGH, AND PARTICULARLY THICK AT THE BASE, WHERE IT TOUCHED THE GROUND. THIS CLOUD ADVANCED TOWARDS US, PUSHED BY THE WIND. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY WE WERE LITERALLY SUFFOCATED"



German soldiers in 1915 wearing early versions of gas masks. Even back in World War I some people thought that masks work even if they don't cover your nose

All Images © Alamy

Aerial footage of a gas attack in Flanders. Vast areas could be blanketed in gas in a matter of minutes – to lethal effect



Chaos reigned supreme up and down the Entente line. Lt Guntzberger survived, albeit with a bad case of bronchitis that lasted long after the battle had ended. The human toll of the battle remains hard to estimate. Some historians, especially in the immediate aftermath of the battle, have suggested that the gas attack on 22 April inflicted some 5,000 deaths and 10,000 wounded on Entente troops. Writing more recently, the French historian Olivier Lepick has looked into these figures and considers them wildly overblown (largely for propaganda purposes; they were a helpful way to paint the Germans as particularly barbaric!). Instead, Lepick suggests that 800-1,400 dead and 2,000-3,000 wounded might be a more reasonable figure. Given the confusion and urgency of battle we will never know the exact figures, but we do know the magnitude of the impact the attack had on the rest of the war.

Entente reaction

Entente responses to the deployment of chlorine gas by the Germans on 22 April 1915 were immediate. On 24 April an elite team of scientists was assembled by the French Minister of War, Alexandre Millerand. Within

A British machine gun crew with their anti-gas balaclavas. These hoods were uncomfortable and restricted vision, hearing and communication



just days of the attack both French and British scientists had ascertained, separately, that the Germans had used chlorine gas, and proposed countermeasures. These followed the same basic parameters of the crude German gas masks that had been presented to Entente commanders in mid-April: cotton masks soaked in sodium thiosulphate to neutralise the gas. On 25 April Joseph Joffre, Commander-in-Chief of the French Army, ordered 100,000 cotton masks impregnated with sodium thiosulphate. To these would be added hundreds of thousands of goggles that had actually been ordered earlier in the year in anticipation of a possible chemical attack. Ferdinand Foch, then Commander of the Provisional Northern Army Group (in whose sector the Second Battle of Ypres was still raging), was in possession of 3,200 cotton masks and 500kg of sodium thiosulphate as early as 26 April, just four days after the initial German gas attack. British forces moved with similar alacrity and produced their own cotton masks. These masks were found to be superior to the French version (they were larger, and so fitted better), and they became standard for both nations until better solutions were designed and manufactured.

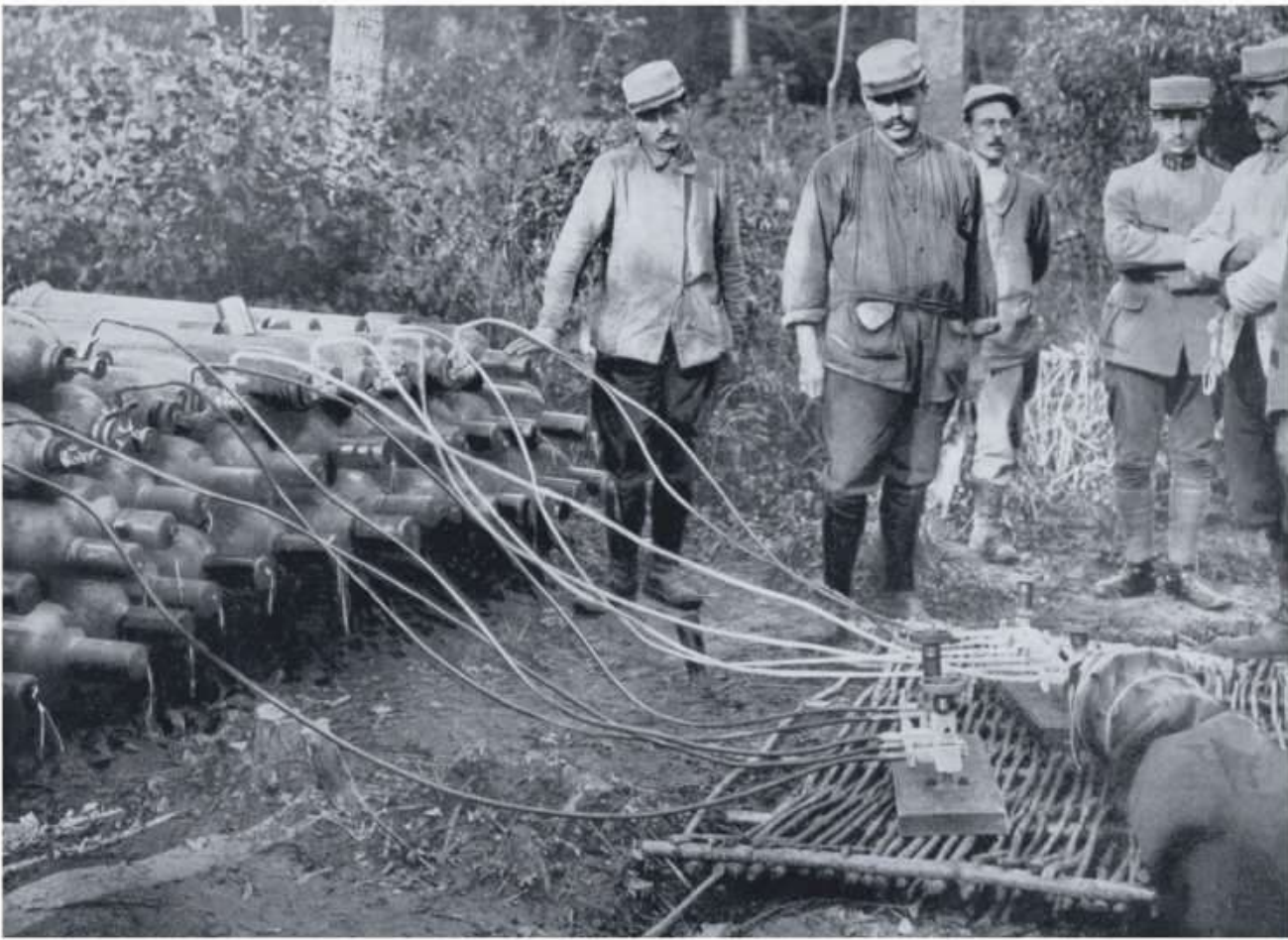
“ONE BRITISH REPORT SUGGESTED THAT THE GERMANS WERE PLANNING ON SHOWERING ADVANCING ENTENTE INFANTRY WITH SULPHURIC ACID SPRAYED FROM SPECIAL HOSES”

French and British liaison and cooperation worked surprisingly well to combat the threat of poison gas in the immediate aftermath of 22 April. A rare joint report featuring French and British research was published on 28 May 1915, which collated the findings that Entente scientists had made in the frantic days and weeks after the initial attack. The report noted the importance of masks being wet rather than dry, which partially explains the practice of urinating on masks before putting them on (water could be in short supply in the trenches, urine was not). It also refuted some claims being made that intense rifle fire, grenades, and other explosions might be enough to help diffuse poison gas more quickly. In practice, it did very little. This, of course, was not the only fanciful claim making the rounds in May 1915. One British report suggested that the Germans were planning on showering advancing Entente

infantry with sulphuric acid sprayed from special hoses. In response, the French army deployed five tonnes of petroleum jelly to the front, and instructed attacking troops to smear any exposed skin with the jelly as protection against sulphuric acid attacks. The British information was quickly found to be false, but for at least a week or two French troops were nominally expected to wear an anti-gas balaclava, a wet cotton gas mask, goggles, and slather themselves with petroleum jelly before going over the top. How anyone was supposed to fight, let alone lead, in such conditions is unclear.

Of course, the Entente response was not purely defensive. Both the French and British rapidly got to work developing their own poison gas programmes. The British were operating from a real standing start, and were unable to get the resources together to launch a gas attack until the Battle of Loos on 25





Using gas cylinders to deploy poison gas was vulnerable to changing weather conditions, and firing artillery shells filled with the deadly substance quickly became the preferred method



Animals played a vital role in World War I. Working close to the front lines meant they needed protection, too



As well as bombs and bullets, troops fighting in WWI now faced the prospect of an agonising death from poison gas



One of the most iconic images of the war. British soldiers who have been gassed, awaiting treatment

September 1915. One-thousand-four-hundred British soldiers manned 5,500 chlorine cylinders spaced out over a front of some four kilometres (2.5 miles). The results were not ideal. The hoses meant to deploy the gas in front of the British line were porous, causing it to seep out in, or near, the British trench system. A very light wind, coming from the southwest, also impeded the swift deployment of the gas away from British trenches and towards the Germans. The 2nd British Infantry Division alone counted 2,639 British soldiers who had fallen victim to their own gas as it wafted back into their trenches. Despite this, the British were able to use the gas to launch an attack that had local successes. The German troops opposite them mostly had no gas masks, and therefore could only respond in the same way French troops had back in April: they abandoned their positions

“THE 2ND BRITISH INFANTRY DIVISION ALONE COUNTED 2,639 BRITISH SOLDIERS WHO HAD FALLEN VICTIM TO THEIR OWN GAS AS IT WAFTEO BACK INTO THEIR TRENCHES”

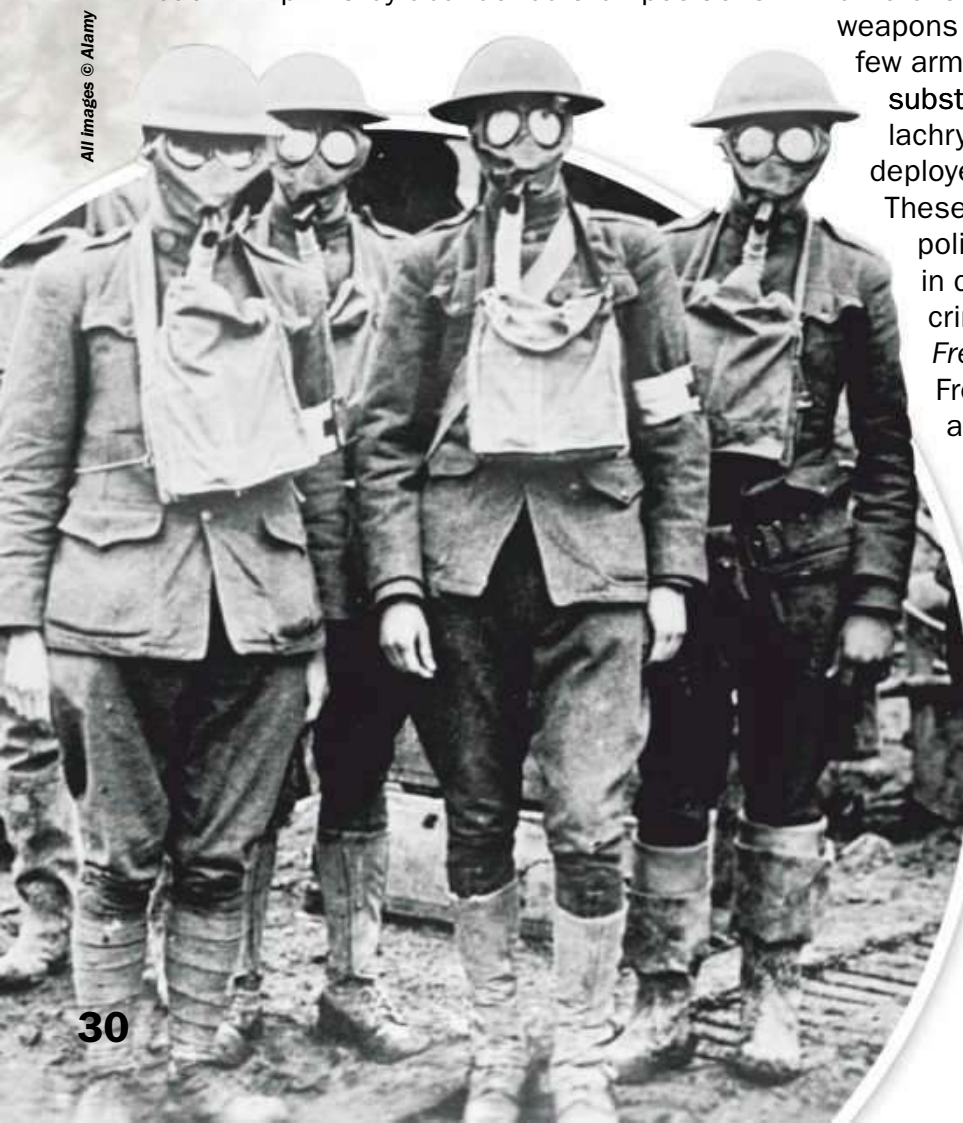
and retreated frantically, in search of fresh air to breathe. The British captured Loos and advanced some three kilometres (two miles), but no more. The battle had not been the runaway success the British had hoped for.

The French, on the other hand, took a very different approach to their own chemical weapons programme. They were one of the few armies to actually march to war with substantial supplies of chemical weapons: lachrymatory gas (tear gas) that was deployed by rifle- or Besozzi gas grenades. These were largely deployed after the police had had success with tear gas in dramatic showdowns with armed criminals in and around Paris. The *French Official History* claims that the French did not start experimenting with asphyxiating gases (like chlorine or phosgene) until January 1915 “after finding out that the Germans had launched their own programme”. Unfortunately for the French, they did not enter the war with a chemical industry large enough to meet the burgeoning needs of armaments production (especially the production of high explosives) and a robust chemical

weapons programme. Chemicals had to be imported from the United States at great cost and a significant time lag. As a result of these constraints, and the lack of personal protective equipment, the French developed a unique approach to chemical warfare: they fired poison gas from artillery shells. This allowed for German artillery emplacements to be attacked and prevented the French infantry from falling victim to their own gas.

The French launched their first poison gas attack on 16 June 1915, two months after the German attack at Ypres. French forces deployed a gas used by no other power in the war: a mixture of potassium cyanide and hydrochloric acid that, when detonated, produced noxious hydrocyanic acid. While the testing of the gas had not been promising (a guinea pig exposed to the gas at Vincennes, on the outskirts of Paris, had survived two back-to-back exposures before succumbing to a massive inundation of the gas), the shells had the upside of also being incendiary. French Tenth Army, during the Second Battle of Artois, had 10,000 of these gas shells and fired them at key points from 16-18 June. Most of the shells were fired against German artillery emplacements and rear areas opposite General Balfourier’s XX CA, which played a key role in the attack. The Iron Corps was afforded a full 90 minutes without any German artillery fire when they went over the top: the German guns had all been silenced by the gas shells. While the Second Battle of Artois would not succeed in its objective (capturing Vimy Ridge), it was proof of concept.

After this attack, gas was principally deployed by artillery and was mainly used to suppress enemy artillery rather than against enemy infantry. By mid-1916, 25% of all artillery shells being produced by France were filled with poison gas. Gas played a critical, and surprisingly unsung, role in every major Allied attack from 1916 onwards. It all began with the Second Battle of Ypres.

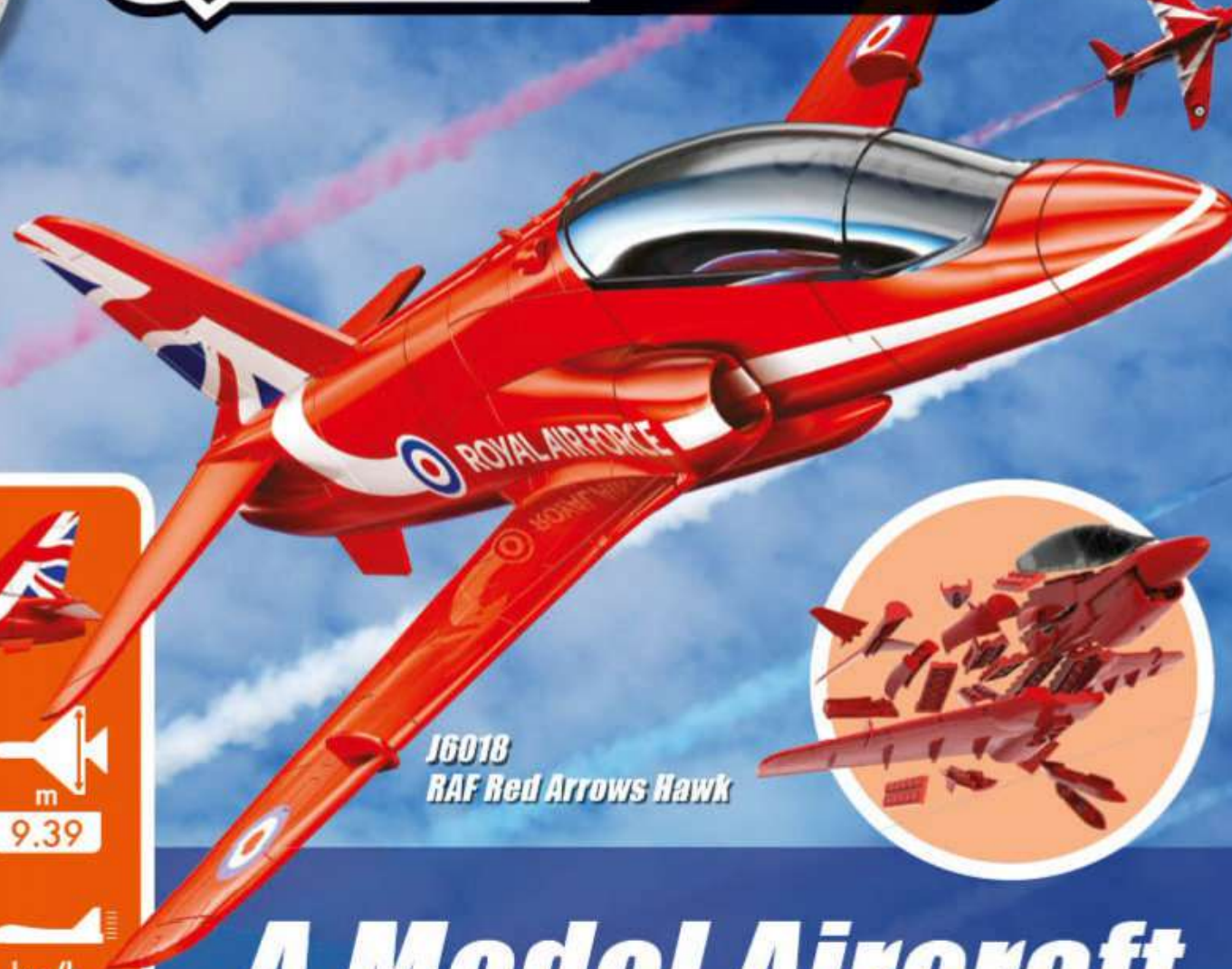


The horrific effects of gas warfare on troops were brought vividly to life in Wilfred Owen’s famous poem Dulce et Decorum Est



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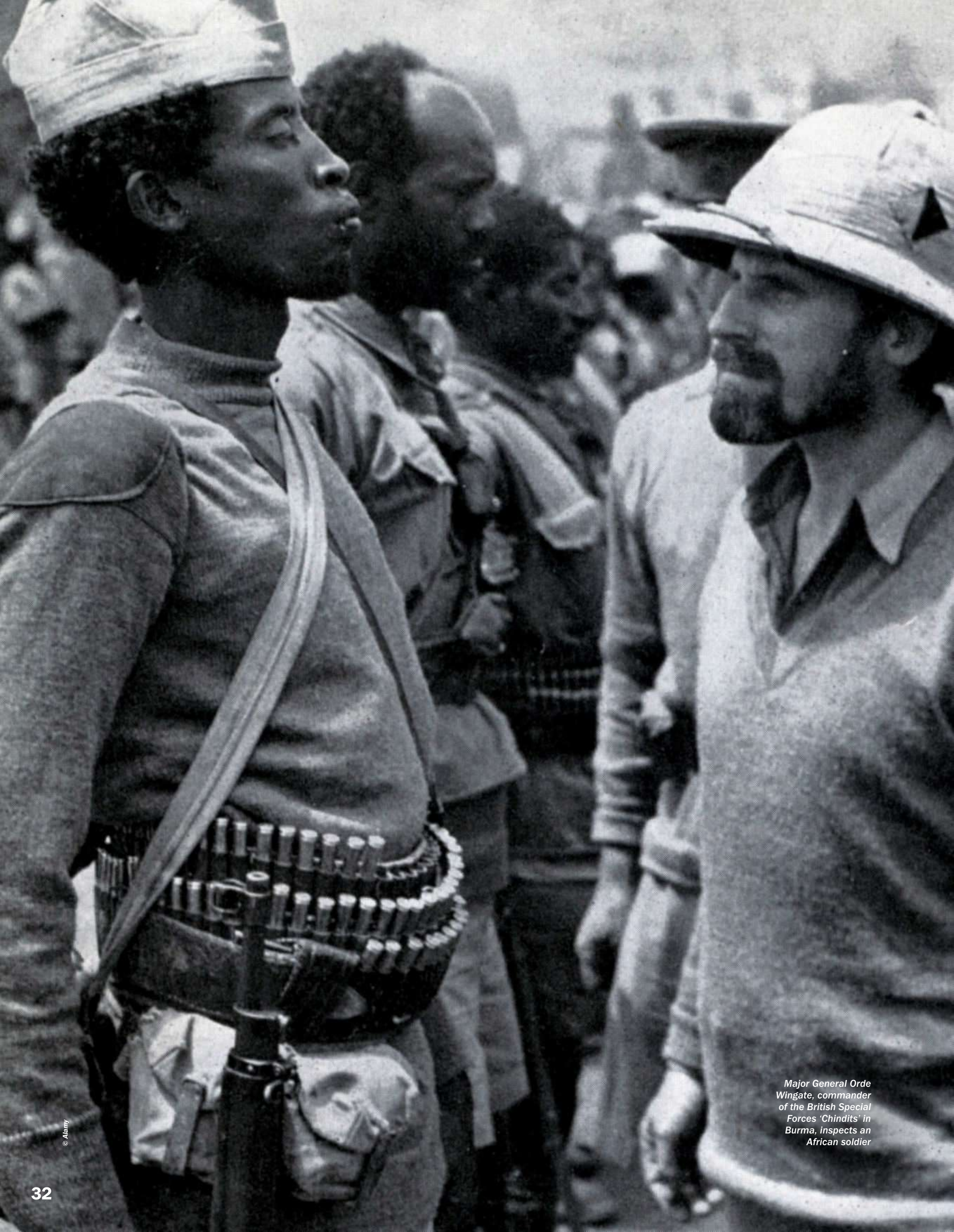
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Major General Orde Wingate, commander of the British Special Forces 'Chindits' in Burma, inspects an African soldier

FORGOTTEN AFRICANS

OF THE FORGOTTEN FOURTEENTH

WORDS: TOM GARNER

Ghanaian veteran Joseph Hammond recalls fighting for the British Empire within the 'Forgotten' Fourteenth Army, as well as his outstanding fundraising efforts against Covid-19

Of all the men who fought in the British Fourteenth 'Forgotten' Army in Burma during WWII, its African soldiers have been the most neglected. Approximately 100,000 Africans served during a horrendous campaign against the Japanese but they received little recognition at the time – and even today. The contribution of Indian and Gurkha troops in this multinational force has remained well known but even the Fourteenth Army's commander, Field Marshal William Slim, failed to mention the African soldiers in a speech to his men at the end of the war.

One of those forgotten soldiers was Private Joseph Ashitey Hammond – a mechanic who served in the Gold Coast Regiment. Despite his technical skills, Hammond also fought extensively on the front line before being a participant in a notorious event against West African veterans that led to Ghana's independence. Seventy-five years after his military service, he made unexpected headlines across the world when he raised tens of thousands of pounds to assist the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Now an honoured veteran, Hammond is the only known WWII survivor from the Gold Coast Regiment. Here, he describes fighting for the British Empire, avoiding Japanese snipers, witnessing the birth of a nation and helping people across Africa.

The Gold Coast

Born in 1925, Hammond grew up at a time when Ghana was a British colony known as the Gold Coast. He recalls that relations between the British and Ghanaians were a confusing mixture of oppression and benevolence: "We were colonial subjects and whatever they put across you had to do it. You had no choice – you had to obey because the situation was like a 'master' and his 'boy'. That's what it was like during Gold Coast times.

"However, we loved the British very much. Nobody thought we were like slaves and during

the colonial days it was very good. We had our livings, there was no problem and we were all happy. Things were so cheap and we honestly didn't realise. I don't want to be a hypocrite because I agree that they did a lot wrong. Mistakes are inevitable as a human being – you can't stop it. There were one or two [British people] who were very bad but it's inevitable with any country. There were a lot of British who were also very good. They treated us nicely although they sometimes put pressure on us, but it doesn't matter now because we are a free country."

**"WE FOUGHT BACK
FEROCIOUSLY WHEN WE
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I WAS FEARLESS BECAUSE I
WAS YOUNG. YOU DON'T FEAR
THEN LIKE YOU DO WHEN
YOU GROW UP"**

Hammond was attending school when WWII broke out but he planned to join the Royal West African Frontier Force. "The army inspired me a great deal," he says. "I read a lot about it and the commanders that were serving in West Africa. General George Giffard was the Commander-in-Chief of all the West African troops and I personally knew the Brigade Commander [of 2nd West Africa Infantry Brigade] – Brigadier Collen Richards."

Three West African battalions had already fought against the Italians in East Africa by the time Hammond volunteered on 31 July 1943 after leaving school. He joined the Gold Coast Regiment and trained as a mechanic. "We passed through rigorous training, it was really thorough," he says. "I passed my

mechanical training with flying colours because I was determined and worked very hard to be successful. The British headquarters was our camp and when I completed my training I was posted to Takoradi in western Ghana."

While he was based in Takoradi, Hammond was selected to act as a driver for British officers. "I learned a lot about the military during those days. A Colonel was the overall boss of the mechanical workshops and I drove him and a Major on a tour of all the mining areas of the Gold Coast. I did this very well because on the way there was a technical hitch on my vehicle and I managed to repair it on two occasions. After concluding all of our trips there was another technical hitch but I fixed the problem. I found it very hard but I worked assiduously and the officers were very happy."

In November 1943, Hammond was one of ten soldiers from his unit who were drafted to go on active service in the Far East. They were transported to India aboard HMS *Circassia* – a ship that had 2,500 soldiers on board. When he arrived, Hammond was given extra training in what is now Bangladesh for 3rd Battalion, Gold Coast Regiment. "My first impression of India was that it was very hot and we went to do our initial training five miles from Khulna. We mechanics were attached to the battalion because our officers needed us to repair their American Jeeps when there were no accessible roads. We became infantrymen and learned the rudiments about war. It helped that we were trained as soldiers but it also helped that we were specialised."

3rd Battalion was one of three battalions in the Gold Coast Regiment that served in 2nd Infantry Brigade, 82nd West Africa Division. The 82nd consisted of troops from the Gold Coast, the Gambia and Nigeria and were commanded by General Hugh Stockwell. The 81st West Africa Division had already been fighting in Burma against the Japanese for months when the 82nd took over from them at Buthidaung in Rakhine State.

Joseph Hammond at Black Star Square in Accra



Image: Forces Help Africa



“Kill or be killed”

Hammond was keen to see combat. “We fought back ferociously when we took over from the 81st. I was fearless because I was young. You don’t fear then like you do when you grow up. When you are young the blood is very hot and you don’t care,” he says. “Our aim was to defeat the Japanese so our spirits were very high. We wanted to prove our troops were better than the Japanese and the British forces who had trained us were excellent.”

3rd Battalion first encountered the Japanese at the Irrawaddy River, which is Burma’s largest and most important waterway. “When we arrived there was a very rich town on the river and that’s where we started our fighting. The Japanese crossed until they realised that we would massacre them. They changed their minds and instead started going southwards while we followed them.”

Although the Japanese were in retreat they were by no means defeated and the enemy inflicted casualties on the battalion. “I remember there was a river at Ma-ubin and we lost six of our soldiers there. It was very sad but what could we do? Nothing – it was war. It was very bad but we continued the fighting.”

Despite Hammond’s initial enthusiasm he was not prepared for the aggressive resistance that the Japanese inflicted on the advancing West Africans. “It was ferocious and I’d never seen fighting like that before. The Japanese mentality was that when you died in a war you went to the Almighty God. If they were captured as prisoners they had disgraced their family. However, if they died fighting then they had

honoured their family, who everyone would then respect. It was a terrible, hugely different mentality that everybody wanted to die and therefore it was terrible for us.

“YOU HAD NO SYMPATHY FOR THE ENEMY AND WE WERE THERE FOR A PURPOSE. IT WAS A CASE OF ‘KILL OR BE KILLED’ SO WE FOUGHT”

“The Japanese were difficult to capture because they preferred to die and didn’t care. There were very high casualties and we experienced very, very tough opposition from the enemy. This made the fighting very serious and difficult. The slightest mistake and we would have been killed. You had no sympathy for the enemy and we were there for a purpose. It was a case of ‘kill or be killed’ so we fought.”

Apart from the Japanese, the West Africans also had to contend with severe shortages. “Sometimes we were so short on food that at one point there was none for three or four days. We had become very low on our biscuits and corned beef but then a plane dropped food for us by parachute and that worked well.”

Despite the ferocious enemy and supply problems, Hammond recalls that relations between the multinational groups in the Fourteenth Army were cordial: “The

comradeship during the war was most excellent and there was no [differentiation] between black and white. This is because if you are fighting you cannot have enmity with your brother. During the war the Japanese would shoot at you so we brother soldiers loved each other very much. Any suggestion that there was discrimination is a lie. Because of the comradeship we were able to succeed.”

“The ground was shaking”

By mid-1945, the 82nd Division had fought their way to the town of Kindaungyi but they met especially fierce resistance from the Japanese. “The fighting was so intense when we caught up with them that we sometimes solicited the help of the artillery, which was a light battery. They bombarded the place so heavily that the ground was shaking. There were also planes that were bombing Japanese positions at the same time.”

Although the Japanese were being heavily attacked by the Allies they resorted to guerrilla-style warfare. “While the whole place was shaking we were in trenches. We had to lie on the ground because snipers were positioned up trees. We saw them and started digging the trenches to hide in. It was a case of shooting them so that they didn’t shoot you. I remember that at one point I wanted to urinate but it was hard to do in my trench. I had to jump out but you had to think about safety all the time because this fighting lasted for three days.”

Despite the continual intensity of the battles, the West African soldiers fought on with gritty resilience. Hammond says that a large part of



Soldiers of the 11th East Africa Infantry Division advance along a Burmese road

© Alamy



ROYAL WEST AFRICAN FRONTIER FORCE

The British Empire established battalions in its West African colonies that earned battle honours in both World Wars

Formed in 1900 by the British Colonial Office, the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) was initially established to garrison the colonies of the Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. Each colony contributed battalions of varying size and the WAFF first saw action against German forces in Africa during WWI. The force earned eight battle honours during the conflict and received royal recognition in 1928 when it became the Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF).

Although the majority of its personnel were black soldiers, 14.6 percent of its personnel were white officers or NCOs. During WWII, hundreds of these white troops were Poles who'd joined the RWAFF after the fall of Poland. The force was also expanded into the formations of the 81st and 82nd (West Africa) Divisions that consisted of 28 battalions. Both divisions saw extensive service in Italian Somaliland, Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and – most significantly – Burma.

Despite the RWAFF's distinguished history, it was very slow at commissioning African officers, with the highest rank being awarded to Major Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, who later became a military dictator of Nigeria. In the post-war period, the force was dismantled in stages from 1957 when the Gold Coast Regiment became the Ghana Regiment of Infantry upon independence. The RWAFF was permanently disbanded in 1960 when the Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone all moved towards becoming independent states.

Soldiers of the Gold Coast Regiment practise their marksmanship in the English village of Bisley, Surrey, for the King's Prize, c.1937



Images © Getty



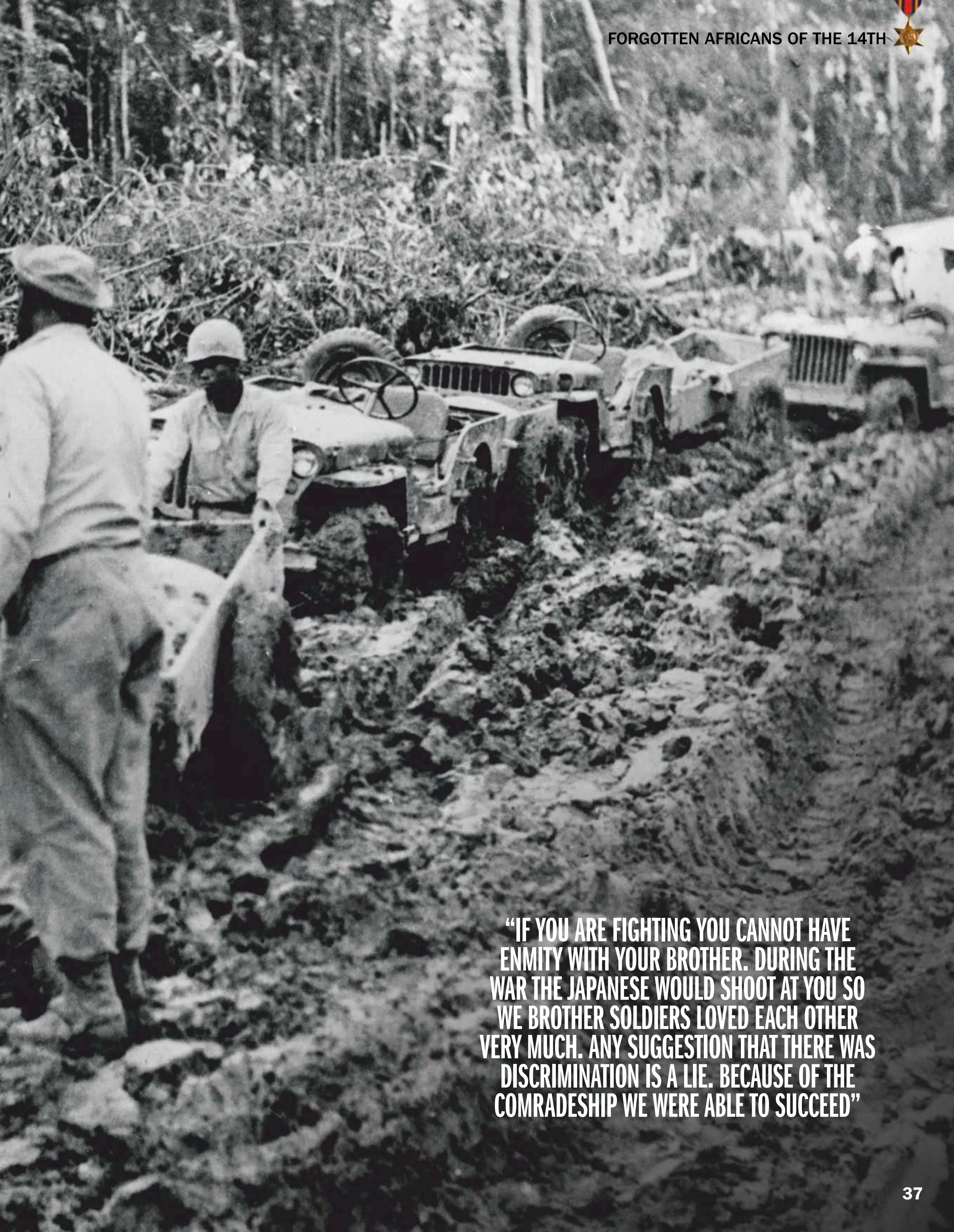
Queen Elizabeth II inspects troops of the newly renamed Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment at Kaduna Airport, Nigeria, during her Commonwealth Tour, 2 February 1956



FORGOTTEN AFRICANS OF THE 14TH

Joseph Hammond's main job as a mechanic was to repair Jeeps that broke down along inaccessible roads in Burma





“IF YOU ARE FIGHTING YOU CANNOT HAVE ENMITY WITH YOUR BROTHER. DURING THE WAR THE JAPANESE WOULD SHOOT AT YOU SO WE BROTHER SOLDIERS LOVED EACH OTHER VERY MUCH. ANY SUGGESTION THAT THERE WAS DISCRIMINATION IS A LIE. BECAUSE OF THE COMRADESHIP WE WERE ABLE TO SUCCEED”



their perseverance was founded on loyalty to both their homeland and their colonial rulers: “We were determined to fight and defend the British Empire and the Gold Coast. That was our aim and we managed to defend them both. We thought, ‘If we’re not going to defend the British Empire, who is going to defend it? We have to defend it!’ This was because if the enemy advanced then we might be colonised too and become slaves of the Japanese. We would never let the Gold Coast become a Japanese colony and we would have rather died than become slaves. Today, I am very proud that I took part.”

While he was at Kindaunggyi, Hammond developed an eye infection. It became so bad that he was evacuated from the front line. “While we were there I realised that my left eye was protruding. The officer examined it and I was flown away by plane. Two other soldiers and I were flown from the battlefield to Pune in India. When I arrived there with my comrades we were transferred to a huge hospital. There were sick beds in front of us as far as the eye could see that were full of white, Indian and West African soldiers.”

Hammond was treated by a medical officer called Lieutenant Crockett, who diagnosed what had potentially happened to his eye. “I was given a cup of tea and he told me that contaminated blood from a wounded soldier might have got in my eye. We had been fighting so much that I perhaps hadn’t had time to put my hand across my face. The subsequent disease had caused my eye to protrude.”

“WE WERE DETERMINED TO FIGHT AND DEFEND THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND THE GOLD COAST. THAT WAS OUR AIM AND WE MANAGED TO DEFEND THEM BOTH”

Confirmed as having a ‘Category C’ infectious disease, Hammond remained in hospital to make a full recovery but his war was over. “I was going to be sent back to the front line but fortunately the war came to an end so I was lucky that I had been away from the battlefield.”

Accra Riots

After the war against Japan ended in August 1945, 3rd Battalion, Gold Coast Regiment returned home in December of that year to a warm welcome. “When we came back to Ghana we were the first group to arrive back in the country. We arrived in our jungle green battledress and the Governor of the Gold Coast, Alan Burns, came and congratulated us. He shook our hands and when he came to me I was so young that he patted my head! I shook hands with him and I was so happy and proud that the Governor was shaking hands with me.”

Hammond was discharged from the Royal West African Frontier Force in January 1946, but life outside the army was hard for the veterans. “We all prepared to go into civilian life but it was not easy because there were no jobs. We should have received pensions but the [colonial authorities] failed in their promise. We decided to go and plead with the Governor with a petition that was signed from across the whole country.”

The dispute over the Gold Coast veterans’ pensions was an issue that became a political tinderbox. The colony’s wartime governor, Sir Alan Burns, had since been replaced by Sir Gerald Creasy on 12 January 1948. Creasy had inherited a territory that had become unsettled by a boycott of European goods by the Ga chief, Nii Kwabena Bonnie III. The boycott had been called in response to the inflated prices of imported European products but it was scheduled to end on 28 February 1948.

A march of ex-servicemen in the Gold Coast capital of Accra coincided with the end of the boycott but the British authorities were already rattled by a series of riots earlier that month. The veterans’ plan was simply to hand a petition to Creasy that demanded they receive their war benefits and the pay they had been promised.

Hammond was among hundreds of ex-servicemen who peacefully marched on the governor’s residence at Fort Christiansborg on 28 February 1948. “We chose about ten men to present the petition while we were on our way.

Image: Forces Help Africa



Hammond pictured at Black Star Square in Accra. It is also known as Independence Square



Soldiers of the 81st West Africa Division mingle with Indian soldiers after arriving in India for jungle training, c.1942



© Getty

FORCES HELP AFRICA

FORCES HELP AFRICA
SUPPORTING OUR FORCES & VETERANS

This Ghana-based organisation supports and honours Commonwealth veterans across the African continent who have served in the British armed forces

Forces Help Africa (FHA) speaks and acts on behalf of all pre-independence African veterans who served the British Crown or under British command within Commonwealth countries. Veterans may have become sick, injured or fallen on hard times as a result of serving their country, or might be seeking to relocate back home to various African countries within the Commonwealth.

FHA's vision is to implement ways of providing financial, social and emotional support to all veterans and their families and to reinstate them successfully into society. This is carried out in several ways: welfare, training, advocacy, consultancy and support.

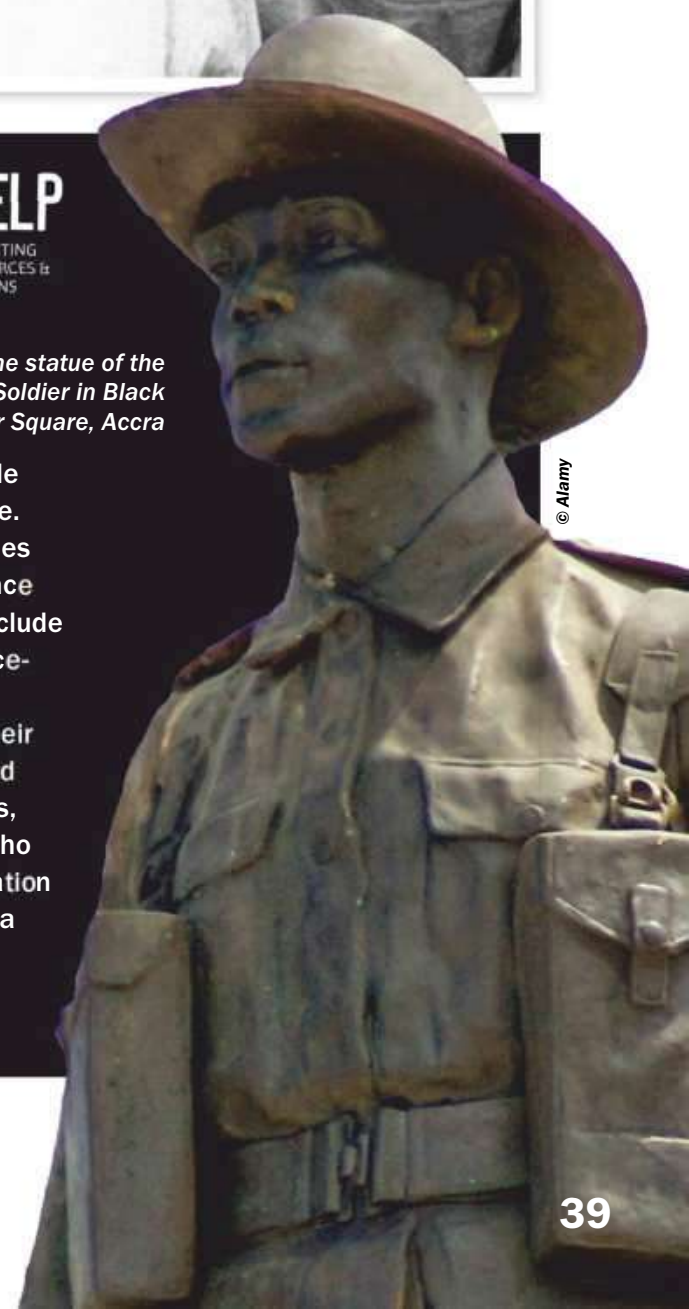
In terms of welfare, FHA collaborates with the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League to pay pre-independence Commonwealth veterans and widows in Africa. Ex-British soldiers can also receive training

to support their post-military careers with transferable skills that most will have acquired during their service. FHA's Advocacy, Consultancy and Support programmes are additionally designed to advise the various Defence Ministries in Africa on a variety of issues. This can include defence contracts, procurements or any other defence-related issues in Africa.

In addition to supporting veterans, FHA honours their service with the FAV Awards Africa. This annual award recognises the incredible achievements of individuals, groups within security forces and corporate bodies who have created a sense of state pride, unity and inspiration through their respective roles. Awarded both in Ghana and across Africa, the award culminates with a gala presentation dinner for the category finalists.

For more information visit: forceshelpafrica.org

The statue of the Unknown Soldier in Black Star Square, Accra



© Alamy



Hammond pictured wearing a protective face mask and his WWII medals during one of his fundraising walks, May 2020



Hammond met Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex in London and later received a congratulatory letter from him in recognition of his fundraising efforts



Hammond pictured next to the Ghanaian flag after being promoted to the honorary rank of Warrant Officer Class 1

Images: Forces Help Africa

Two-hundred-and-ten veterans were marching quietly when we arrived at a junction. Sergeant [Cornelius] Adjetei was our leader and I was seven feet behind him in the second row.”

Despite the veterans’ peaceful intentions they had not reckoned on Superintendent Imray, the British head of the local police. “When we arrived at the junction the police attacked several of us. We spoke and spoke but Superintendent Imray wouldn’t let us through and he was very unreasonable. We were forced to scale down from ten people to five [to present the petition] but Imray still didn’t want us to go. He then asked one of his Sergeants to shoot but the man didn’t want to do it. Imray was highly annoyed, grabbed the gun off the Sergeant and the first man he shot down was Sergeant Adjetei in the front line.”

The march had turned into a murder scene and worse was to follow. “Imray had shot one of our comrades and when another veteran made a gesture he shot him too. Why? We weren’t armed and this made us enraged that they’d shot our leader. Superintendent Imray then shot another veteran. All this was going on before my eyes and now I’m the only one left to tell the story of what happened.”

As well as Sergeant Adjetei, Imray had killed Corporal Patrick Attipoe and Private Odartey Lamptey. In the ensuing panic a further 60 ex-servicemen were wounded by the colonial police. The incensed veterans took their revenge elsewhere. “When this happened we went to the post office and set fire to a car, although we didn’t kill the man inside. This started riots because we were so annoyed and what happened earned the displeasure of the country. The Gold Coast had sent their children to war to fight for the British and this tragedy is what happened instead.”

The ensuing social disorder that emerged from the killing and wounding of the veterans became known as the Accra Riots. Civilians

“THE ENSUING SOCIAL DISORDER THAT EMERGED FROM THE KILLING AND WOUNDING OF THE VETERANS BECAME KNOWN AS THE ACCRA RIOTS”

took to the streets in the capital and other Gold Coast towns and cities. They attacked European and Asian businesses and property and the subsequent looting and continued protests against police brutality lasted for five days. This forced Governor Creasy to declare a state of emergency and enforce a new Riot Act.

Against this backdrop of violence, the anti-colonial political party United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) cabled the British government in London to demand change. Part of their message read: “Unless Colonial Government is changed and a new Government of the people of their Chiefs is installed at the centre immediately, the conduct of masses now completely out of control with strikes threatened in Police quarters, and rank and file Police indifferent to orders of Officers, will continue and result in worse violent and irresponsible acts by uncontrolled people.”

The British responded by arresting and imprisoning the six leading members of the UGCC in March 1948. However, they were released after a month and the Watson Commission was established to investigate the events surrounding the Accra Riots. The Commission recommended that the Gold Coast should have its own constitution, which was then drafted by a committee that included 40 members of the UGCC.

In 1949, the UGCC splintered to form the Convention People’s Party (CPP). Under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, the CPP began a campaign for self-government that eventually led to the independence of the Gold Coast from Britain in 1957. The country was renamed Ghana and its territory included not just the Gold Coast but also the colonies of Ashanti, the Northern Territories and British Togoland. Most significantly, Ghana was the first African colony to achieve independence, which began what British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan described as the “Wind of Change” period of decolonisation.

Hammond remains proud of his inadvertent contribution to Ghanaian independence but he hasn’t forgotten the human cost. “King George VI dispatched colonial officials to set up a commission to see why there had been killings and realised that Ghana needed a constitution. By changing the constitution the political map was complete so actually we veterans paved the way for Ghana’s independence. If the riots hadn’t happened, independence might have

West African troops often encountered resistance from Japanese snipers who hid up trees



© Alamy



Ashanti troops in the Gold Coast Regiment rest by a roadside during a break in a march during WWII



been delayed. I honestly feel very proud but I also feel for my colleagues who perished such as Sergeant Adjetey, Corporal Attipoe and Private Lamptey.”

Fighting the pandemic

Hammond went on to marry, had five children and variously worked in the hospitality, construction and fishing industries before he retired in 2006. In May 2020 he suddenly made headlines when, aged 95, he walked 14 miles in one week to raise money for charity during the Covid-19 pandemic. His aim was to support frontline workers and vulnerable veterans across Africa by using the raised funds to buy personal protection equipment (PPE). As of November 2020 he has raised over £40,000.

His inspiration for the walk was fellow Burma veteran Captain Sir Tom Moore, who famously raised money for National Health Service charities in Britain. “It was marvellous to see what Captain Tom did. He fought in Burma as well and I thought if he could fundraise for people in the UK why couldn’t I do it for the people of Africa? We planned and selected a date and I started walking two miles a day to raise funds to help the frontline workers against Covid-19. I could also have died because I’m 95 but I didn’t mind.”

Hammond believes that the danger posed by the pandemic is greater than what he experienced during WWII. “Everyone is frustrated because it is a deadly disease. Covid-19 is worse than the war we were in

and we were there. At least in Burma we could see the enemy positions and attack them. I wouldn’t wish war on anybody but Covid-19 is invisible, which makes the whole thing very difficult and you haven’t got much to defend yourself against it.

“A MAN RECENTLY TOLD ME THAT WHAT CAPTAIN TOM AND I DID HAS ACTUALLY SHOWED THE WORLD THAT IF THERE IS A PROBLEM WE ALL HAVE TO COME TOGETHER TO SOLVE THE SITUATION”

“It is more dangerous than war and I saw people dying in numbers in Ghana, Britain and everywhere all over the world. I went to war against all this death so that there can be more money for a vaccine to solve the problem. I would like to see Covid-19 eradicated from Africa and the whole world.”

On the last day of his walk on 25 May 2020 (which was also Africa Day), Hammond was joined by Iain Walker, the British High Commissioner to Ghana, who described him as “a force of nature and an inspiration to many”.

He was also congratulated by Prince Charles and Prince Harry and is the recipient of a Commonwealth Points of Light Award. Awarded on behalf of Queen Elizabeth II, Walker stated how Hammond had earned the distinction: “Her Majesty The Queen presents Points of Light awards to outstanding volunteers across the Commonwealth who change the lives of their community: Private Hammond exemplifies these qualities.”

Now also promoted to the honorary rank of Warrant Officer Class 1 by the Commander-in-Chief of the Ghanaian Armed Forces, Hammond has experienced a huge swathe of his country’s history. He retains great pride about how he and his fellow West African servicemen made idealistic sacrifices: “I fought ferociously against the Japanese for the British Empire. We have secured the peace and are keeping it for the whole world. We did it for freedom.”

Even today, despite the passage of 75 years, WWII veterans like Hammond and Captain Tom are still inspiring people to make the world a better place. It is a fact that Hammond – who has since met his British counterpart over a video call – readily recognises. “I’ve been fighting to help people all my life – first for the British Empire and the Gold Coast during WWII; now, with Captain Tom in Britain, I’m doing it to help people in Africa. A man recently told me that what Captain Tom and I did has actually showed the world that if there is a problem we all have to come together to solve the situation. I’m happy I did it for humanity, we all need to help each other – that’s all.”

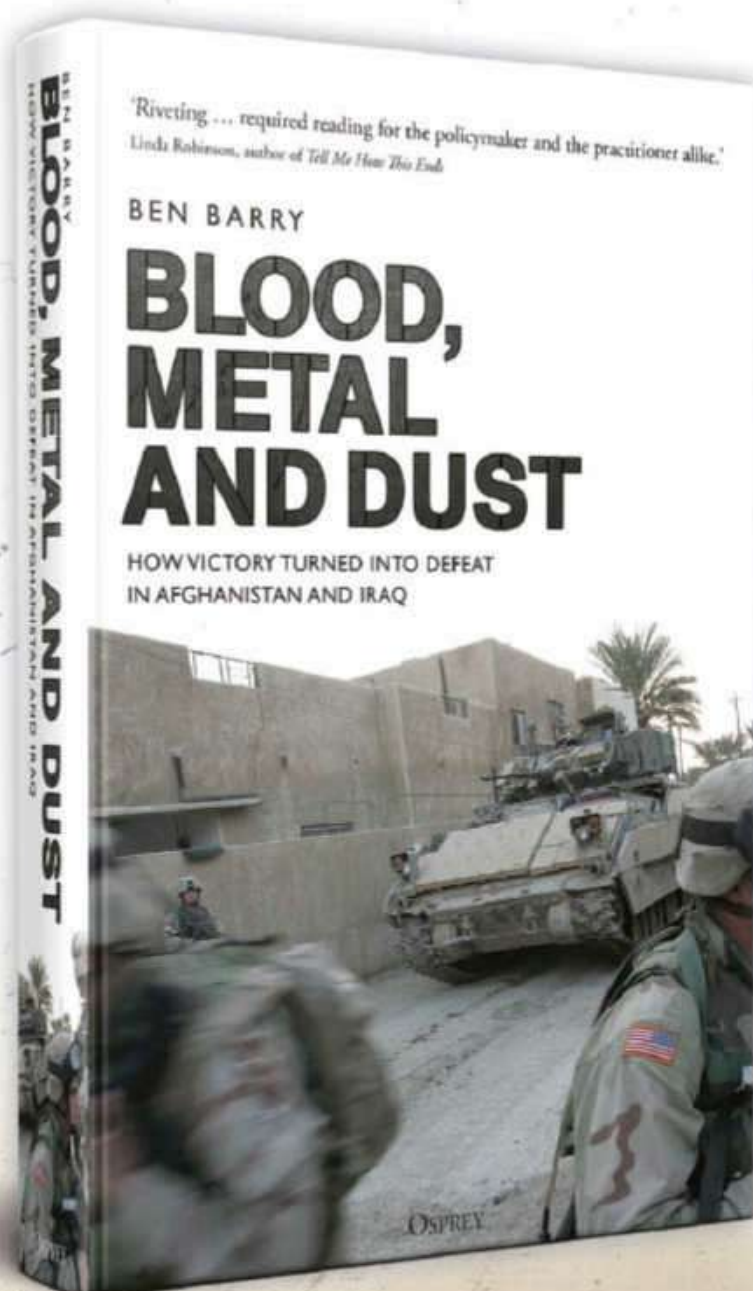
Gold Coast cadets celebrate Ghana’s new independence and the raising of their new country’s flag at the Ghanaian Embassy in London, 6 March 1957



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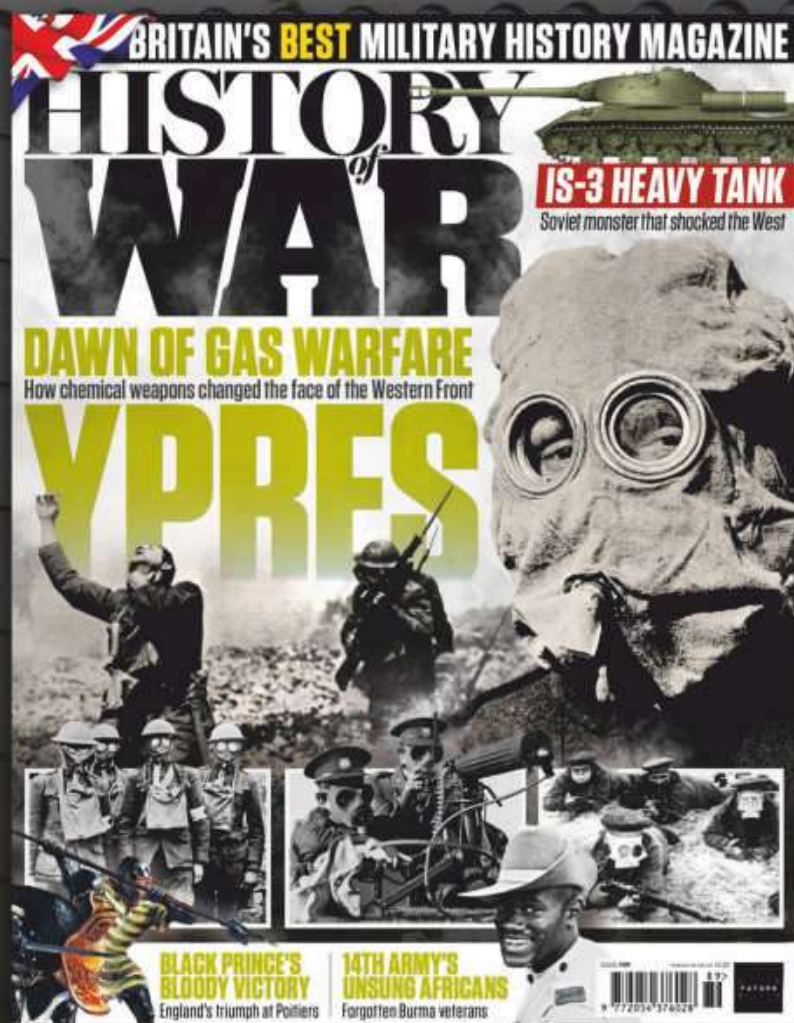
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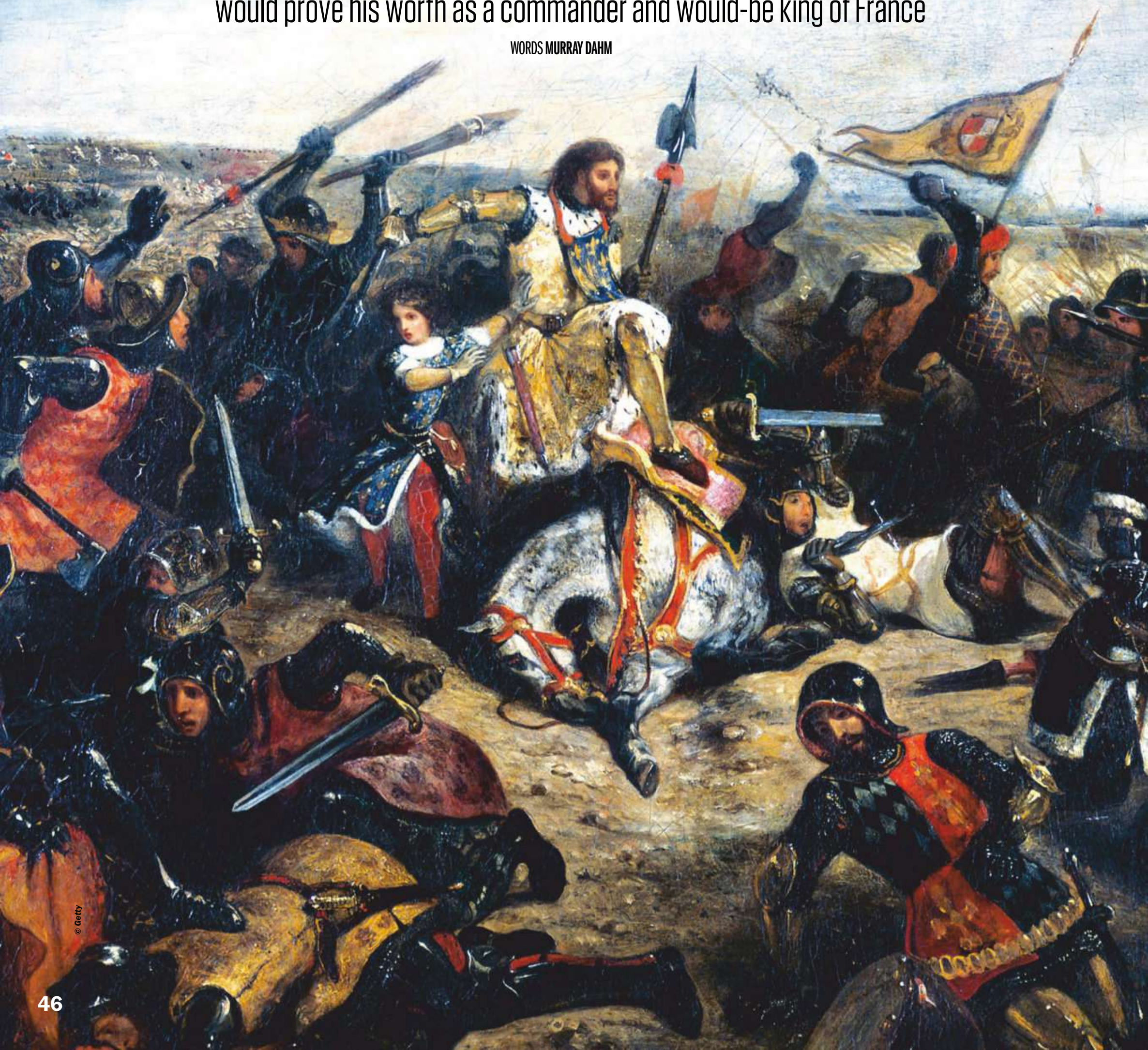
AQUITAINE, WESTERN FRANCE 19 SEPTEMBER 1356

Great Battles

POITIERS

In this Hundred Years' War clash, the Black Prince, heir to the throne of England, would prove his worth as a commander and would-be king of France

WORDS MURRAY DAHM



On the death of King Charles IV of France in 1328, Edward III of England was his closest male heir and therefore the legitimate successor to the throne of the childless Charles. This was due to the ancient Salian (or Salic) law that prevented female succession (it had, however, only been enacted in 1316). Despite Edward's legitimate claim, the French crowned Philip, Count of Valois, King Philip VI of France and the slighted Edward refused to pay him homage. In revenge, Philip confiscated Edward's lands in Aquitaine (held as a vassal duchy to the crown of France). Edward therefore declared war against France and plunged England and France into war that

would last, on and off, for the next 116 years, a war we know as the Hundred Years' War.

In 1340, Edward declared himself King of France and his forces achieved spectacular success against the French in the early years of the war, winning the naval Battle of Sluys in 1340 and then at the Battle of Crecy in 1346. This allowed the English to capture Calais in 1347. More campaigning was interrupted by the outbreak and spread of the Black Death, which reached and proliferated in France and then England in 1348 and 1349. Philip VI died in 1350 to be replaced by his son who became King Jean II (or King John II) known as le bon, 'the good'. French manoeuvres against English Gascony were renewed in 1352 and a new

Painting by Eugène Delacroix (1830) of the battle showing the fall of Geoffrey de Charny, standard-bearer of the king of France

OPPOSING FORCES

ENGLAND

LEADER

Prince Edward of Woodstock

MEN-AT-ARMS (DISMOUNTED)

2,000-4,000

LONGBOWMEN

2,000-3,000

GASCON INFANTRY

1,000-1,500

MEN-AT-ARMS

60

ARCHERS

100

VS

FRANCE

LEADER

King Jean II le bon

MEN-AT-ARMS (DISMOUNTED)

8,000

ARBALESTERS

2,000

LIGHT TROOPS

16,000-50,000

CAVALRY

300-500



Image: Wild / PD / Bibliothèque Nationale de France

campaign by English forces in France was planned in 1354, one to be led by Edward's eldest son, Edward, the Black Prince. His campaign would culminate in one of the greatest and most significant victories of English forces against the French during the Hundred Years' War, at Poitiers in September 1356.

We have a relatively large number of sources for the campaigns of the Black Prince and the Battle of Poitiers, but none of them provides a complete picture; all have the usual issues of bias and reliability that must be resolved, and we are left with multiple, partial pictures, some of which contradict one another. Nonetheless, we can, with care, use them all to create a fairly certain picture.

Edward landed with his relatively small force (no more than 4,000 men) in Gascony in September 1355. He was reinforced with local troops bringing his strength up to approximately 8,000 men. The immediate plan was a large raid from Bordeaux to Narbonne, the Grand

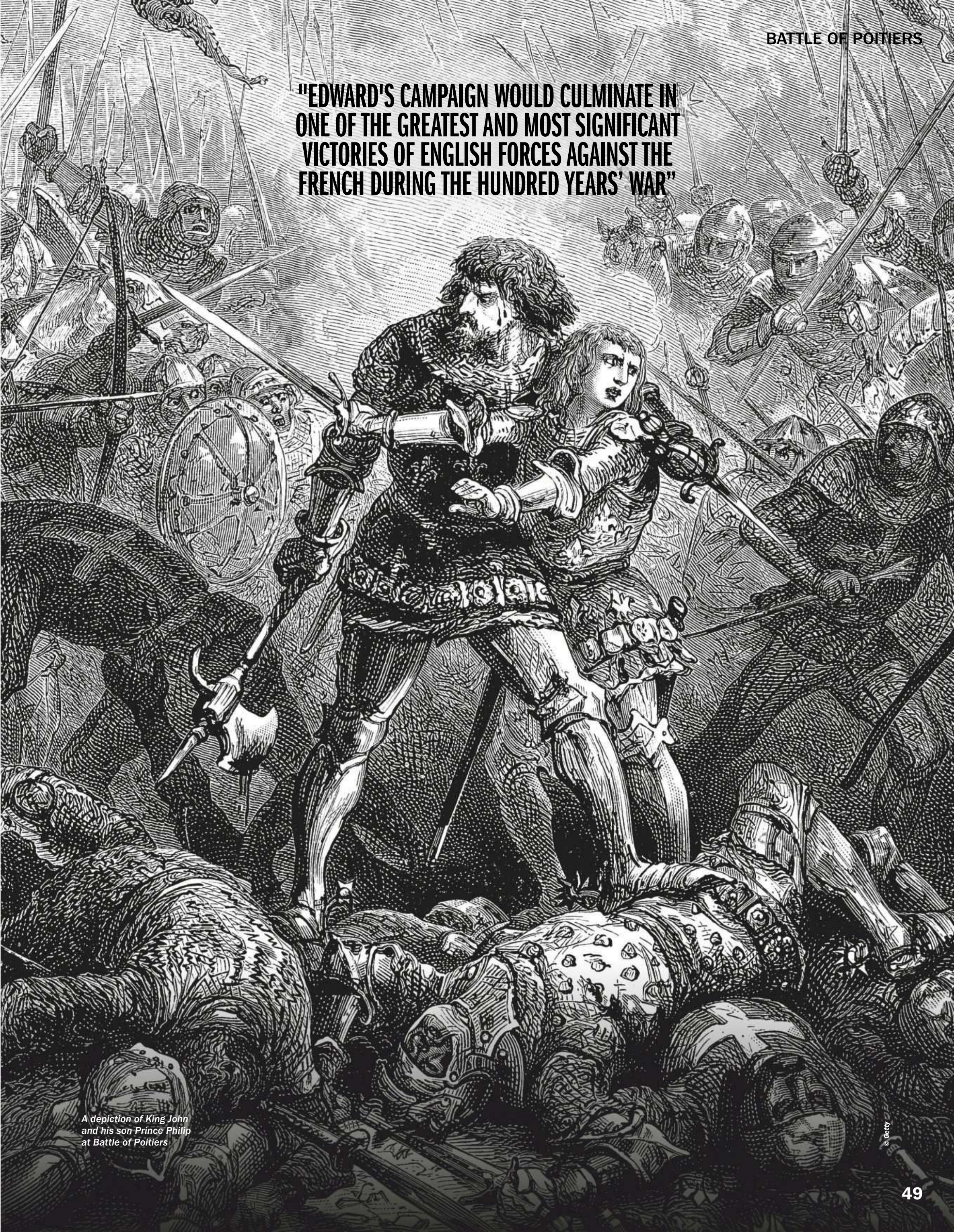
Chevauchée, plundering indiscriminately and burning towns along the outward and return journeys (more than 500 were put to the torch). It was a brutal strategy aimed at depriving the French crown of revenue and of provoking them. French forces avoided challenging Edward to open battle, however. The English returned to friendly territory for winter but small raids began again in the new year and spring 1356. More reinforcements arrived and Edward left on a new raid that would take him northeast towards Bourges. Edward learned at Vierzon that the French forces under King Jean were making their way towards him in late August. He therefore turned west towards Tours – he had marched 514 kilometres (320 miles) in a month. The English army was unable to cross the Loire River as the French had destroyed all the bridges. The French drew nearer and Edward withdrew over the River Cher towards La Haye. On the morning of 18 September the French army had caught up with the

Above: The Battle of Poitiers from an illumination from an edition of Froissart's Chronicles

English and were outside Poitiers. Battle was unavoidable. Being a Sunday, the battle would be fought on the following day. This gave the English time to reinforce their position and the French time to gather more reinforcements. It is still debated today whether the English were attempting to provoke a battle or avoid one (or to retreat at the first opportunity). The rejection of all attempts at negotiation by Edward made provocation more likely, although the English were severely outnumbered. The confidence of their successes up to that point and the confidence of (and in) Edward had a part to play. The position the English army had taken up was also defensively very strong. Despite this, the exact location of the Poitiers battlefield remains in doubt.

The French had caught up with the English army south of Poitiers on the banks of the

"EDWARD'S CAMPAIGN WOULD CULMINATE IN ONE OF THE GREATEST AND MOST SIGNIFICANT VICTORIES OF ENGLISH FORCES AGAINST THE FRENCH DURING THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR"



A depiction of King John and his son Prince Philip at Battle of Poitiers

River Miosson, but Edward was able to find ground that was defensible and not the open plains of most of the area. One source tells us this was "one league" (5.5 kilometres) from Poitiers, another says two leagues – so there is imprecision. The specific fields of "Beauvoir and Maupertuis" are also mentioned. The hedges, marshes, vines and bushes of the English position have since disappeared, so locating it remains problematic. The French chronicler Jean Froissart tells us that the position was a "length of road strongly protected by hedges and bushes, and they have lined the hedge on both sides with their archers". Other sources such as Geoffrey le Baker mention a "dense wood", a marsh and a ditch; others combine all of these features. The French would be able to charge downhill most of the way towards the English, although the last stretch to the English lines turned uphill slightly.

Edward laid out his forces in three divisions, or battles, as was standard practice at the time (Froissart tells us that they were only in one division). Each was commanded by an experienced man, Thomas de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, on the left, and William de Montagu, earl of Salisbury, on the right. Edward commanded the centre division and was accompanied by his close friend and skilled military strategist, Sir John Chandos. Edward also took advantage of the terrain, drawing up his men behind a hawthorn hedge in which there were two gaps. This meant there were only two routes of attack for the French. According to Froissart, the archers were in a "harrow" formation, probably an open wedge with the point towards the enemy. The archers may have been deployed up to seven ranks deep. The standard English tactic was for the men-at-arms to dismount and fight on foot, although Edward had some horses at the ready.

The French also arranged their men in three divisions, according to Froissart each with 16,000 men (giving 60,000 in total), but some accounts mention only 11,000 men. Some modern accounts accept the lower number or a larger one at 26,000 men in total. Regardless, the English were heavily outnumbered. Some reconstructions have four divisions of French, a vanguard and three others (Froissart talks of 300 mounted men being detached to make an initial charge, other sources number this force at 500). With this vanguard was the constable of France, Gautier de Brienne, the exiled duke of Athens. His troops included a force of crossbowmen or arbalesters (because they were armed with the arbalest, a later, heavier version of the crossbow). The French also dismounted most of their men-at-arms and advanced on foot – the memory of the devastation wreaked by English longbowmen on the French knights at Crécy only ten years earlier would have been relatively fresh in their minds. This memory may also explain the decisions taken by King Jean during the battle.

The French army arrayed itself for an assault on the inferior English numbers, each division behind the first since the English position did not allow for an attack on a wide frontage. The English also commanded a strong defensive position. It is possible the English feinted a retreat in order to provoke a charge by the French mounted knights, and in the end they

19 SEPTEMBER 1356

How the English recorded a decisive victory against French forces on French soil

01 THE BATTLEFIELD IS REACHED

Edward moves his forces towards Tours when he learns that the French under King Jean are approaching from the north. Unable to cross the River Loire, Edward retires southwest towards Poitiers. The French pursue and reach Poitiers on Sunday 18 September. Both sides prepare, and the English advance to a better defensible position.

02 THE ENGLISH DEPLOYMENT

Edward divides his army into three divisions of dismounted men-at-arms. The left division is commanded by the earl of Warwick, the centre by Edward and the right division by the earl of Salisbury. The archers, numbering up to 3,000, are placed on each flank in harrow (wedge) formations. Edward also takes advantage of the terrain with hedges, marshes, wooded areas and ditches protecting his flanks, and funnelling the French attack.

03 THE FRENCH DEPLOYMENT

Jean divides his forces into four divisions and dismounts most of his knights to fight with shortened lances. In the front he has 300-500 mounted knights. With them is a force of dismounted knights and arbalesters. Next is a division of men-at-arms and infantry up to 15,000-strong led by the dauphin, Charles. Then there's the division of the duke of Orléans, and last that of the king.

04 BATTLE BEGINS

The French cavalry, led by the marshals Arnoul d'Audrehem and Jean de Clermont, charge but do not coordinate. One charges Edward's division, the other charges Warwick's. Both are defeated by English archery and driven back.

05 THE DAUPHIN ADVANCES

Charles advances his division towards the English. The retreating forces of the initial cavalry charge get mixed up in his advance and many men are cut down by English arrows. The approach to the English position only allows a single division of French to advance at them at a time.

**10 FLIGHT AND PURSUIT**

The capture of the king and the fall of the Oriflamme signal the final defeat of the French. The remaining troops break and flee and are pursued by English troops eager for plunder and ransom. Some are run down close to the field, others make their way back to the town of Poitiers, where they find the gates shut. Several French men-at-arms surrender in front of the town walls rather than be cut down.

09 FIGHTING TO THE END

When the French division joins combat with the English, the capital de Buch charges with his cavalry into the flank of the French. This, and possibly some English troops returning from pursuit of the retreating French, turns the tide. The king's standard-bearer is slain and the Oriflamme itself is taken. King Jean is captured (despite his precaution of having 17 men dressed identically to him).

08 THE FINAL ADVANCE

Jean leads his enlarged division towards the English. The English arrows are all but depleted so not many Frenchmen fall to archery. The English archers join the ranks of the men-at-arms.

06 JEAN HESITATES

The defeat of the Dauphin's division causes the French king to hesitate. He sends the Dauphin and his other sons away from the battle. Whether through dismay or because he is ordered to do so, the duke of Orléans takes his division from the field. Some English pursue. Jean then gathers all of his remaining troops, including remnants from the first two unsuccessful charges, into a single division and prepares for a final advance.

07 EDWARD'S RUSE

Edward takes the opportunity of the French reorganisation to gather all of his men into a single division. He also sends the capital de Buch with a mounted force of 60 men-at-arms and 100 archers behind a hill, unseen, to charge the French advance in the flank.

Edward, the Black Prince, is shown accepting the surrender of King Jean II of France





© Getty



The Black Prince
led the English
forces to victory

Left: King Jean II
on his return to
France in 1360,
from a near-
contemporary
illustration

© Alamy

did charge, but in a disorganised way. This may also have been as a result of a disagreement between the commanders (the marshals Arnoul d'Audrehem and Jean de Clermont) about tactics. The French knights therefore charged at the English lines in two groups at two separate points; d'Audrehem charged Edward's division while Clermont charged towards Warwick's. These charges proved disastrous and were driven back by the English archers, Clermont was killed, as was the constable, Brienne, and d'Audrehem was captured.

The first French division of dismounted men-at-arms then advanced, led by the dauphin of France, the teenaged duke of Normandy Charles, along with the duke of Bourbon. Despite interruptions from the retreating vanguard, these fresh troops engaged the English infantry. They were peppered with arrows, which must have taken a great toll on their numbers, but they managed to reach the English lines. In hard fighting, more of the French leadership fell and the standard-bearer of the dauphin was captured. King Jean was dismayed at the defeat of his second division and ordered his three sons, including the defeated dauphin, away from the battlefield. This was probably demoralising to the French and the duke of Orléans, the 21-year-old brother of the king, also retreated with his division at that moment or soon after. Some saw this retreat as the duke fleeing from the battle but he may have been ordered to do so just as the king's sons had been. This action robbed the French of a large number of troops, but they probably still outnumbered the English. Contemporary chroniclers recorded that this decision robbed the French of the chance of victory. Some among the English thought that this was a general French retreat and charged in pursuit but they soon learned of their mistake and a handful of English knights were captured

(the only ones to fall to such a fate that day). The delay in Jean's reorganisation probably also gave the English troops a chance to rest.

The remaining French troops joined with King Jean's division and advanced. This division was

“KING JEAN WAS DISMAYED AT THE DEFEAT OF HIS SECOND DIVISION AND ORDERED HIS THREE SONS, INCLUDING THE DEFEATED DAUPHIN, AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD”

therefore larger and consisted of the remaining troops, including some crossbowmen who had been in the constable's division. By this point in the conflict, which had been raging for perhaps three hours (longer than most medieval battles), the English longbowmen were running short of arrows because they had little impact on the king's division as it advanced. Edward drew his men into a single division (this may be where Froissart's error of a single division comes from). The forces with Jean were largely fresh whereas the English had been fighting for most of the battle. Edward now ordered a small force of 60 men-at-arms and 100 archers to mount so that they could encircle the advancing French. This decision implies that this had been a part of Edward's battle plan all along (the men's horses would need to be nearby, harnessed and ready). Coming so late in the battle also implies that Edward did not have the numbers to detach this force at the start of it, and so

needed to await the later phases of the battle before enacting such a plan. This force was commanded by the capital de Buch, Jean de Grailly, and his force made its way around a small hill, out of sight of the French. The English archers, their arrows spent, joined the infantry armed with daggers and swords. The capital de Buch charged the flank of the French as they reached Edward's lines and this combined attack on two fronts finally broke the French. The bearer of the Oriflamme standard, Geoffrey de Charny, fell with the standard and this signalled the last gasp of the French. King Jean himself was captured and the remaining French fled the field, pursued by the English, eager for prisoners and ransoms. Many escaped to Poitiers itself with the English and Gascons on their heels but the gates to the town were shut and many French were massacred outside.

The defeat at Poitiers was even more devastating than Crécy had been. The French lost approximately 2,500 men-at-arms whereas the English only lost 40; casualties among less notable troops must have been much higher and we are not given the numbers of wounded. The capture of King Jean and many knights of note was also humiliating. Jean would be held captive until 1360 before being ransomed, and his capture led to the Treaty of Brétigny in 1360 where the English laid aside claims to the French throne but gained larger possessions in Aquitaine and Calais.

The Battle of Poitiers was not won by the longbow, but this weapon was an important part of the successful defensive tactics of Edward. In addition to the defensible position that could not be attacked by the superior numbers of the French in one body, Edward's cavalry encirclement must have been part of his thinking from the start.

THOMAS CUSTER

*Stealing two enemy flags
just three days apart,
Tom Custer was the first
person to be awarded
two Medals of Honor*

**“YOU MIGHT THINK
THAT TOM LACKS
CAUTION, JUDGEMENT.
ON THE CONTRARY HE
POSSESSED BOTH TO AN
UNUSUAL DEGREE. HIS
EXCELLENT JUDGEMENT
TELLS HIM WHEN TO
PRESS THE ENEMY, AND
WHEN TO BE MODERATE”**

George Custer



Heroes of the Medal of Honor

THOMAS CUSTER

While George may be the most famous, or infamous Custer, after risking his life to capture two Confederate flags in the thick of battle, his younger brother Tom was arguably the most beloved

WORDS: HARETH AL BUSTANI

Aged just 16 when the US Civil War broke out in 1861, Thomas Ward Custer was too young to enlist. However, eager to fight alongside his celebrated older brother, George, for the Union, he simply lied about his age and joined the 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry. As the country was torn apart, he fought against the Confederate South in Tennessee and Georgia, before being promoted to Second Lieutenant and serving in the 6th Michigan Cavalry in Virginia – on the staff of his Brigadier-General brother.

By April 1865, two years after the Battle of Gettysburg, the Union Army – also known as the Federal Army – outnumbered the Confederates by 112,000 soldiers to 58,400 and was close to victory. After a nine-month siege, the Confederate ‘rebel’ army was forced to flee its capital Richmond and the neighbouring stronghold of Petersburg in Virginia. With his supply lines shattered and his army spread across a wide arc, the Confederate General Robert E Lee retreated towards Amelia Court House. There, he hoped to regroup and resupply, before linking up with Joseph E Johnston in North Carolina.

With the Union hot on their heels the Confederates crossed Namozine Creek, felling trees to slow down their pursuers and positioning their men behind breastworks along the west bank. As the Federal troops approached the opposite bank, gunshots



Capturing the enemy's 'colours', or battle flag, was so shocking it forced 11 Confederate soldiers and three officers to immediately surrender

exploded from the woods beyond. The Union army responded with artillery fire, creating enough space for one group of skirmishers to engage the enemy from the river's edge, while another dismounted, forded the river downstream and attacked the enemy flank. Desperate to buy time, 800 Confederate soldiers mounted a last-ditch rearguard defence, fortifying positions at the intersection of three roads behind the Namozine Presbyterian Church.

Advancing towards the church, the Federal troops spotted the Confederates dug in behind their entrenchments – some hiding in out-buildings, others behind an old fence and makeshift breastworks. After briefly being pushed back, the Union troops regrouped and prepared for the attack. Dressed in his red neck tie, Tom watched on as his men beat back an attempted rebel counter-attack and stampeded their horses. With the cavalry preparing to charge, Tom rode to the front of the brigade and joined in. Hurling caution to the wind, he throttled onwards at full gallop, leaping over the barricade under heavy gunfire.

As the shell-shocked Confederates scattered before him, Tom spotted the 2nd North Carolina Cavalry's colour-bearer. The colours, a flag or standard, were a powerful force on the battlefield – when consumed by chaos or fear, it was the regimental flag that Civil War soldiers turned to for order. It symbolised the regiment's honour; if the flag

advanced or fell back, the men were expected to follow. It was a prestigious – and very risky – duty to wield it.

His steed punctured by bullets, Tom pressed on, wrenching the flag from its bearer and hoisting it high, while screaming for the soldiers around him to surrender. Shocked and humiliated, the 11 Confederate troops and three officers complied. Having lost just three men, with 15 wounded, the Union captured 350 Confederate soldiers, alongside 100 horses and a canon. Among those taken was Brigadier-General Rufus Barringer, who was led away ‘to safety’ by Union forces.

The next morning, a proud George wrote to his wife, telling her about the brave actions of his “most gallant” brother: “Tom is always in the advance. He will go to Washington with his captured flag when the trophies are sent there. He will receive 30 days leave and a Medal of Honor.”

As the broken Confederates desperately tried to regroup, things went from bad to worse. The disruption in their lines

“THERE WAS IN THE ARMY NO MORE POPULAR MAN THAN TOM CUSTER. HE WAS YOUNG, HANDSOME, A PRINCE OF GOOD FELLOWS AND FULL OF BRAVERY THAT EVER CHARACTERISED THE CUSTERS”

Charles Windolph, Medal of Honor recipient and Little Bighorn survivor

of communication meant an expected supply of 300,000 rations would not be coming to Amelia Court House. Forced to send his men out to forage food while he awaited reinforcements, Lee lost a crucial day’s march. Over the next two days, the Union army continued to chase down the increasingly desperate, hungry and exhausted Confederates, before finally catching up with them for a final engagement at Sailor’s Creek.

As they set off on the morning of 6 April, Tom and his comrades were tired but they knew the enemy was close. Within an hour, they caught up with the Confederate rear, and began fighting towards Sailor’s Creek. Spotting a Confederate battery preparing to fire, Tom and George sent in the cavalry, who swiftly captured 800 men, 300 wagons and nine canons.

Having crossed the creek at two separate locations, the Confederate ranks were growing increasingly chaotic. While Lieutenant-General Richard S Ewell lined his corps along the west bank of Sailor’s Creek, Lieutenant-General

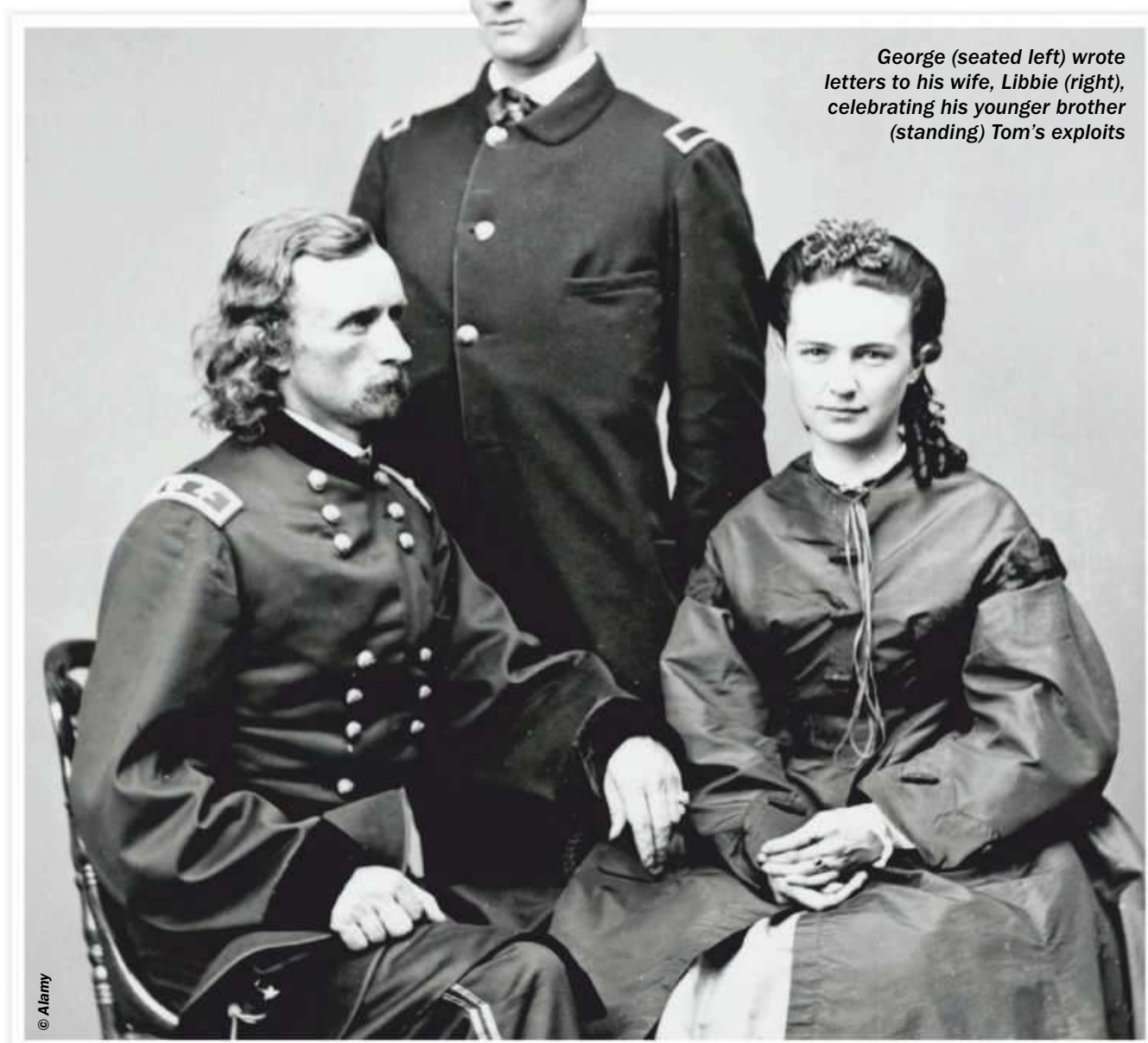
Tom died fighting alongside his brothers George and Boston at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876



Richard H Anderson occupied the high ground along Danville Road.

When the Federal artillery began hammering Ewell's position that evening, with their own artillery and ordnance captured the Confederates had no response. Half an hour later, the Union infantry rushed towards Little Sailor's Creek, pushing the enemy back and waving handkerchiefs at them as if to goad them into surrender. However, after heavy rainfall the river was deep and swampy and difficult to cross. As the Federal troops emerged on the other side, they were repelled with well-timed volleys, fired from behind the Confederate breastwork.

Brigadier-General Truman Seymour later said, "The Confederate Marine Battalion fought with peculiar obstinacy." Some rebels even launched a counter-attack, pushing the Federal soldiers back into the creek in hand-to-hand combat. Things quickly grew more vicious. Confederate Major Robert Stiles recalled, "The battle degenerated into a butchery of brutal personal conflicts. I saw...



George (seated left) wrote letters to his wife, Libbie (right), celebrating his younger brother (standing) Tom's exploits

men kill each other with bayonets and the butts of muskets, and even bite each other's throats and ears and noses, rolling on the ground like wild beasts."

Meanwhile, Tom and his brother chased after Anderson, who had decided to mount a stand at a crossroads further south. With the Union in pursuit, the Confederates tore down fences and erected barricades in the mud, as the fields behind filled with Federal cavalry. With their marching band hitting the field, the Federals prepared to strike – with Colonel Capeheart's cavalry leading the charge. Tom once again burst through like a man possessed, riding to the head of the cavalry. Both sides could sense a defining moment was at hand; this battle was even more desperate than Namozine: more claustrophobic, more violent.

Under a hail of bullets, Tom roared "Charge!" and darted forwards, leaping the enemy barricade without a moment's hesitation. This time, as he landed, he found himself surrounded by enemy soldiers and began firing his pistol wildly from left to right, frantically dispersing them. But as the Confederates began to regroup, he spotted the red and white banner flapping, adorned with the Confederate stars and bars.

Furiously, he darted towards the standard bearer, who pulled out his pistol and fired, striking Tom in the face and knocking him backwards on his horse. The bullet ripped through his right cheek and out beneath his right ear, narrowly missing an artery. As agony seared through his face, Tom dragged himself upright, blood streaming down his neck and hurtled forth – tearing the flag from the colour bearer and shooting him in the heart.

Seeing Tom riding back, covered in blood and waving the enemy colours, one of his comrades yelled, "For God's sake, Tom, furl that flag or they'll fire on you!" Tom handed the flag to an aide, and roared to his brother, "The damned rebels have shot me, but I've got my flag!" With Tom refusing to see the medic, George had to have him arrested and dragged back to the rear to keep him away from the battle.

Before long, the Confederate lines were utterly overwhelmed and shattered, sending the soldiers fleeing into the woods. Dubbed the 'Black Thursday of the Confederacy', the battle cost the rebels nearly 10,000 soldiers – a fifth of Lee's remaining troops. As Lee surveyed the aftermath, he remarked, "My God, has the army dissolved?" Not even he could recover from this. Just three days later, he finally surrendered.

The celebrations would be short lived. On 14 April, less than a week later, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Ten days later, at a solemn ceremony, Tom and others received the first ever Medals of Honor. Secretary of War, Edwin M Stanton, thanked them for their bravery: "It is with profound grief that I cannot return to you the thanks of the late President." The next month, on 22 May, Tom became the first man to receive a second Medal of Honor. Remarkably, his two acts of bravery were separated by just three days.

After the war, Tom joined George's 7th Cavalry, where the two served together from 1866 to 1876, patrolling the Western Plains. They were both killed, alongside 220 other soldiers and their brother, Boston, fighting Sioux and Cheyenne warriors at Little Big Horn. Their deaths would be immortalised as Custer's Last Stand.



Tudor Rebellion

Sir Thomas Wyatt's armed rebellion to overthrow Queen Mary I almost ended in the execution of her implicated sister, Princess Elizabeth

WORDS TOM GARNER

The 1550s were one of the most turbulent times in English history. Europe was split between the old certainties of Roman Catholicism and the new reforms of Protestantism; England became a divided country. This was most keenly felt in the years 1547-58 when the state religion of the country changed three times. In the middle of this tumultuous decade, an age of kings, came a revolt that threatened the lives of three past, present and future queens. The failure of Wyatt's Rebellion of 1554 would have profound but unintended consequences for the course of English history.

Although Henry VIII had broken with the papacy and established an independent Church of England, he remained a Catholic and the country largely followed suit. However, his nine-year-old successor, Edward VI, and his governors sought to change that.

Despite being a child, Edward was a zealous Protestant and under his rule England became a Protestant nation for the first time. While this may not seem that important today, in the 16th century it was a new world order. Catholicism had been uncontested for over 1,000 years and its changing character didn't just alter people's spiritual beliefs but also their sense of national identity. The independence of the Church of England engendered a new English nationalism and with it a heightened fear of foreigners, particularly Catholics.

Nonetheless, Edward's Protestantism did not reflect the beliefs of the generally conservative population and many remained

Catholics, including Edward's older half-sister Princess Mary. Mary was half-Spanish, devoutly Catholic and politically close to her cousin Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor. Charles was an inveterate opponent of the Reformation and consequently Edward distrusted Mary – but he had a problem. Until he married and produced an heir, Mary would inherit the throne and could not be ignored. The two warily coexisted until the political situation dramatically changed when Edward fell ill and died at the age of 15 in 1553. There was suddenly a power vacuum to be filled.

“THE REFORMATION HAD STIRRED UP NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS AGAINST FOREIGNERS AND THIS CAUSED SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS”

Before he died, on 6 July, Edward had barred (possibly under duress) Mary and other his half-sister Elizabeth from the succession. Although Elizabeth was a Protestant, her father, Henry VIII, had declared her illegitimate and Edward upheld that principle. Edward and his regent, the Duke of Northumberland, 'agreed' that his cousin Lady Jane Grey should inherit throne. Jane famously ruled as queen for only nine days between 10-19 July, with Northumberland running the government. Mary was quick to act

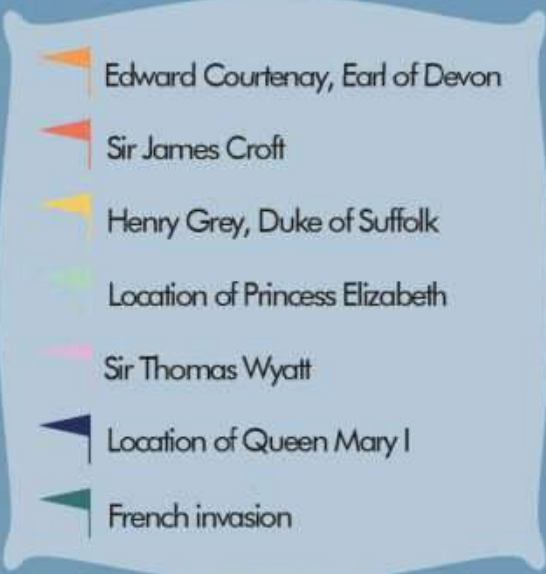
and in a popular movement she was declared queen by the Privy Council and entered London on 3 August. Jane was charged with treason and imprisoned in the Tower of London, while Northumberland was executed.

For the first time in its history there was an undisputed queen of England, but Mary immediately sought to undo the reforms of her father and brother and changed the nation's religion back to Catholicism. This might have been acceptable to the silent majority who were still secret Catholics, but the Reformation had stirred up nationalist sentiments against foreigners and this caused significant problems in Mary's next political move: her forthcoming nuptials.

Mary felt that to spiritually secure her kingdom she had to marry a fellow Catholic and to produce Catholic heirs. On 16 November 1553, a Parliamentary delegation had urged Mary to marry an English husband but the queen had her sights set overseas and rumours abounded that she was going to marry the zealously Catholic Philip II of Spain, the heir of Charles V. On 26 November, prominent men met at the house of Jane's father, the Duke of Suffolk, and planned to prevent a foreign royal marriage. Among the conspirators were Sir James Croft; Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon; Suffolk and Sir Thomas Wyatt.

Devon was chosen as the figurehead of a proposed national armed rebellion that would converge upon London. The precise aims of the rebellion are unclear; it has been hypothesised that they simply wanted to stop the Spanish marriage, or to depose Mary and install Elizabeth

*Sir Thomas Wyatt as painted
by Hans Holbein the Younger
in the mid-16th century*



The revolt of 1554 was highly ambitious and uprisings were planned all over England

Although Wyatt's Rebellion was restricted to Kent and London, its architects initially envisaged a nationwide revolution. The four principal ringleaders were to raise troops in different parts of the country and then simultaneously march on London. The map shows that the regions picked were almost ideally placed for an effective advance on the capital in addition to French military attacks on Calais and landings in Scotland. Queen Mary had to take the rebellion seriously.

as queen, with Devon as her prospective husband. The latter option assumed there would be popular support for a Protestant restoration but the plotters themselves were uncertain reformers. Of all of them, only Edward VI's clerk of the Privy Council, William Thomas, was a committed Protestant; this ambiguity meant the coming rebellion would be nationalistic in tone.

Of the conspirators, it would be Sir Thomas Wyatt the Younger who would become the most prominent. Born circa 1521, Wyatt emerged as a soldier during the last years of Henry VIII's reign. He had been imprisoned for a month in 1543 for taking part in an aristocratic rampage in London but the government put his aggressive behaviour to good use. In June 1544, he was commissioned to lead 100 men against France. He was promoted to Captain of the Boulogne garrison and was knighted in 1545.

Wyatt was renowned as a brave soldier who was skilled in discipline and fortifications. In an attack on Hardelet Castle, he personally stormed the first gate, broke open the door, killed one of the watchmen and captured another two. He was praised for his, "hardiness, painfulness, circumspection and natural disposition to war", but there was an early warning that he was hotheaded and had a weakness for "too strong opinion".

For the rebellion, Wyatt was chosen to recruit soldiers in Kent, alongside other insurgencies in the country. Courtenay was to raise troops in Devon; Croft in Herefordshire; Suffolk in Midlands counties such as Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Once all the groups had been assembled the plan was to start the rebellion on 18 March 1554, then converge on London.

The French ambassador was also involved and if it went well he promised money, equipment and, most importantly, soldiers who would attack the English colony of Calais and also land a force on the east coast of Scotland. This was by no means an amateurish plot but it almost immediately began to fall apart.

Courtenay lost his nerve and didn't travel to Devon to incite rebellion, choosing to remain at court. Word of the plot reached the Lord Chancellor Bishop Stephen Gardiner, who interrogated Courtenay. The hapless earl gave away most of the details. The rebellion was now betrayed and most of the plans never took place, with the notable exception of Wyatt.

Wyatt began in Maidstone, Kent, on 25 January 1554, much earlier than the proposed start of the uprising but in light of Courtenay's betrayal Wyatt felt there was no time to lose. He issued a proclamation that was read out in other Kentish towns that said, "For as much as it is now spread abroad and certainly by the Lord Chancellor and others of the queen's pleasure to marry with a stranger we therefore write unto you, because you be our friends, neighbours and Englishmen, that you will join with us, as we will with you unto death in this behalf." It continued, "We seek no harm to the queen, but better counsel and counsellors. Herein lie the health and wealth of us all."

Wyatt then proceeded to officially raise his standard and made his headquarters at Rochester. The government quickly heard of the Kent uprising and levied 600 troops in London to quell it under the command of Thomas Howard, the octogenarian Duke of Norfolk. At first Norfolk's troops (known as 'Whitecoats')



Above: Sir Thomas Wyatt attacking the Tower of London. This 19th century depiction of the revolt exaggerates the farcical reality of much of the fighting in the capital

Right: Queen Mary I of England. The eldest daughter of Henry VIII was the first undisputed English queen but her pursuit of a foreign Catholic marriage put her at odds with her arguably xenophobic subjects

Wiki / PD / Museo del Prado

SIR THOMAS WYATT



The romantic poet

The rebel soldier's father and namesake was a courtier and talented poet who almost died for the love of Anne Boleyn

Although Sir Thomas Wyatt the Younger is only known to history for a failed rebellion his father (also Sir Thomas) left a more enduring legacy as a pioneering poet. Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-42) is credited with introducing the sonnet to England, which would later be made famous by William Shakespeare, and his poems reveal a sensitive, cultured man who depicted his romantic entanglements at the English court. His works cover courtly life and poignantly portray love, loyalty, betrayal and rejection. In his poem *They Flee From Me* he discussed his unrequited loves: "They flee from me that sometime did me seek/With naked foot stalking in my chamber... It was no dream, I lay broad waking/But all is turned thorough in my gentleness/Into a strange fashion of forsaking."

Most famously, Wyatt is rumoured to have fallen in love with Anne Boleyn. Their precise relationship is uncertain but Boleyn may have rejected his overtures because Henry VIII was courting her. In *Whoso List To Hunt* this thwarted love is possibly alluded to: "Graven in diamonds with letters plain/There is written her fair neck about/'Noli me tangere (Touch me not), Caesar's, I am.'"

In May 1536 Wyatt was imprisoned in the Tower of London for allegedly committing adultery with Boleyn and possibly witnessed her execution from his cell window. His anguish is reflected in a despairing poem that he wrote in captivity, "Alone, alone in prison strong/I wail my destiny... Toll on, thou passing bell/Ring out my doleful knell/Thy sound my death abroad will tell/For I must die/There is no remedy." He was eventually released and his poetry remains a lyrically human portrayal of Tudor life.

Wyatt Senior's alleged love for a tarnished queen almost cost him his life, but he left a significant literary legacy

Image: Wiki / PD / Art



1554: TUDOR REBELLION

defeated a small rebel force at Wrotham but the next day his own men deserted him at the bridge into Rochester, claiming sympathy with the rebels and declaring, “We are Englishmen.”

The defection of the Londoners boosted Wyatt’s confidence and his rebel numbers to between 2,000-3,000 men, and he planned to slowly march on the capital. Wyatt’s army entered Southwark on 3 February and paused there for three days, but the moment when events appearing to be turning in his favour was when the plot began to unravel.

Most of Wyatt’s allies came from a limited support base in Kent and, although much of the gentry were quietly sympathetic to his aims, they did not provide the necessary support while Queen Mary was gathering strength. She had been proactive in defending her position and went to London’s Guildhall to exhort Londoners to come to her aid, and 20,000 men volunteered to act as a militia against the rebels. This was far more than Wyatt’s force and he now faced a dilemma. Southwark was at the southern end of London Bridge but the bridge was strongly defended and all boats were kept on the north bank of the River Thames. At the same time cannon fire from the Tower of London was damaging homes, making the inhabitants understandably restless.

On 6 February Wyatt moved away, crossed the bridge at Kingston and entered Hyde Park the next day, where he had a minor skirmish with government forces. From the park the rebels moved east, passing Charing Cross where some were beaten off, and then along Fleet Street. As they marched they loudly claimed loyalty to the queen, which was met with bemusement by the citizens who looked out of their doorways. The government troops deliberately let Wyatt march on, luring him into a trap. At Ludgate the soldiers of Lord William Howard finally stopped the rebels and Wyatt was forced to retreat towards Temple Bar to face the cavalry of the Earl of Pembroke.

After several fights a herald appeared and asked Wyatt to surrender rather than cause more bloodshed. Wyatt, vastly outnumbered and betrayed, conceded and was taken to Whitehall, and then on to the Tower of London. About 40 rebels had been killed.

Although the rebellion was over the political ramifications intensified, with the focus now turning to Lady Jane Grey. Her father, the Duke of Suffolk, had been one of the key conspirators in the uprising and his actions sealed her fate. Although she had taken no part in the revolt, her existence as a figurehead for Protestant discontent made her dangerous to the Catholic state. Mary sentenced her cousin to death. In a parting blow, she attempted to force Jane to convert to Catholicism to save her soul but the devoutly Protestant Jane refused.

On 12 February 1554, both Jane and her husband Guildford, the son of Northumberland, were executed on Tower Hill. She suffered the horror of seeing her husband’s decapitated corpse return from the scaffold before she herself was beheaded. When Jane was blindfolded she struggled to find the block but she died bravely, with her last words being: “Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” The killing of this intelligent 16-year-old was a terrible act of judicial murder.

The attention was now on Princess Elizabeth. On the same day of Jane’s execution, she was transported to London and arrived on 23 February. Her situation was dire as the conspirators had planned to marry her to Courtenay. The government now tried to ascertain her true role in the revolt and on 18 March she was taken from Whitehall and imprisoned in the Tower. Mary was now being advised that her half-sister was too dangerous to live and Elizabeth was lodged in the same rooms as her doomed mother Anne Boleyn had been before her execution. Her survival looked doubtful but she was inadvertently rescued through the actions of Wyatt.

He had also been committed to the Tower and was tortured for information. He denied that he sought Mary’s death and said his sole intention was “against the coming in of strangers and Spaniards and to abolish them out of this realm”. Crucially, he denied that Elizabeth had been involved in the plot.

Having been sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered Wyatt was executed on 11 April, but before he died he exonerated Elizabeth and Courtenay from any wrongdoing: “Whereas it is said that I should accuse my lady Elizabeth’s grace and my lord Courtenay; it is not so, good people. For I assure you neither they nor any other was privy of my rising before I began. As I have declared to the queen’s council. And this is most true.” After the execution many dipped their handkerchiefs in Wyatt’s blood and his head was stolen as a martyr’s relic.

Wyatt’s last words saved Elizabeth from a fate that would’ve changed history. Although she was still under suspicion, the government could find no explicit evidence against her. She was removed from the Tower on 19 May and, although she was kept under house arrest, her life was spared. Others were not as lucky. Like Elizabeth, Courtenay was spared, but nearly 100 other rebels were executed as traitors. Most were hung, drawn and quartered.

On balance the rebellion was a complete failure – but it had almost succeeded. If the Londoners had supported Wyatt, Mary could have been deposed and Elizabeth enthroned. The charismatic Wyatt and the xenophobic feelings of the population could have made this possible. As it was, Mary married Philip II of Spain on 25 July, but she died in 1558 without an heir, and it was the Protestant Elizabeth who became queen despite her sister’s very best efforts.

Although Wyatt had arguably put her life in danger, his personal intervention ensured that Elizabeth did not suffer the same fate as Lady Jane Grey and consequently the course of English history was changed forever.

The Execution Of Lady Jane Grey, as painted by Paul Delaroche in 1833

***Inset, right:** The beheading of Sir Thomas Wyatt. Although his own religious leanings are uncertain, Wyatt found posthumous fame as a Protestant martyr*



FURTHER READING

- ★ DM Loades, *Two Tudor Conspiracies*, Headstart History Publishing 1992 (first published 1965)
- ★ JA Froude, *The Reign Of Mary Tudor*, Continuum 2009 (first published 1889)
- ★ PF Tytler, *England Under The Reigns Of Edward VI And Mary*, Adamant Media Corporation 2003 (first published 1839)

Image: Wiki / PD / Art



**“THE KILLING OF THIS INTELLIGENT
16-YEAR-OLD WAS A TERRIBLE ACT
OF JUDICIAL MURDER”**

IS-3 HEAVY

This huge Soviet vehicle began an East-West design rivalry during the Cold War

WORDS MICHAEL E HASKEW

MAIN ARMAMENT

The main 122mm D25-T cannon of the IS-3 was adapted in late-1943 from a highly successful field artillery weapon. Although its two-part shells were cumbersome and required assembly prior to firing, the D25-T demonstrated excellent armour penetration capability.

ARMOUR PROTECTION

Taking full advantage of a sloped design, the armour protection of the IS-3 was superior to that of its predecessor, the IS-2, while the plating also benefitted from being lighter.

INNOVATIVE TURRET DESIGN

The cast, rounded turret of the IS-3 resembled an overturned soup bowl or frying pan. The design was intended to minimise the heavy tank's silhouette – but it also restricted the movement of the crew inside.



During a World War II victory parade through the streets of Berlin on 7 September, 1945, British and American observers were astonished with the appearance of 52 brand-new, gleaming IS-3 heavy tanks of the Soviet Red Army's 71st Guards Heavy Tank Regiment. The latest in Soviet armoured technology had been grandly revealed to the West. The successor to the KV-1 and KV-85 heavy tanks that had fought

alongside the legendary T-34 medium tank, the Joseph Stalin series of heavy tanks emerged following the horrendous Soviet armoured losses at the Battle of Kursk in the summer of 1943. A rapid design effort resulted in the rushed production of the early IS-1 and the subsequent IS-2, which entered service in April 1944. The IS-3 followed in the spring of 1945.

Although it was originally intended to counter heavy German tanks on the Eastern Front during the so-called 'Great Patriotic War',

deployment of the IS-3 during the conflict has never been verified. However, it did establish a new standard in tank design which would influence the production of armoured fighting vehicles among the Eastern Bloc and Western nations throughout the Cold War. Indeed, for some time Western military analysts acknowledged that the IS-3, a contemporary of the British Centurion and the American Pershing tanks, was a formidable potential battlefield opponent.

TANK

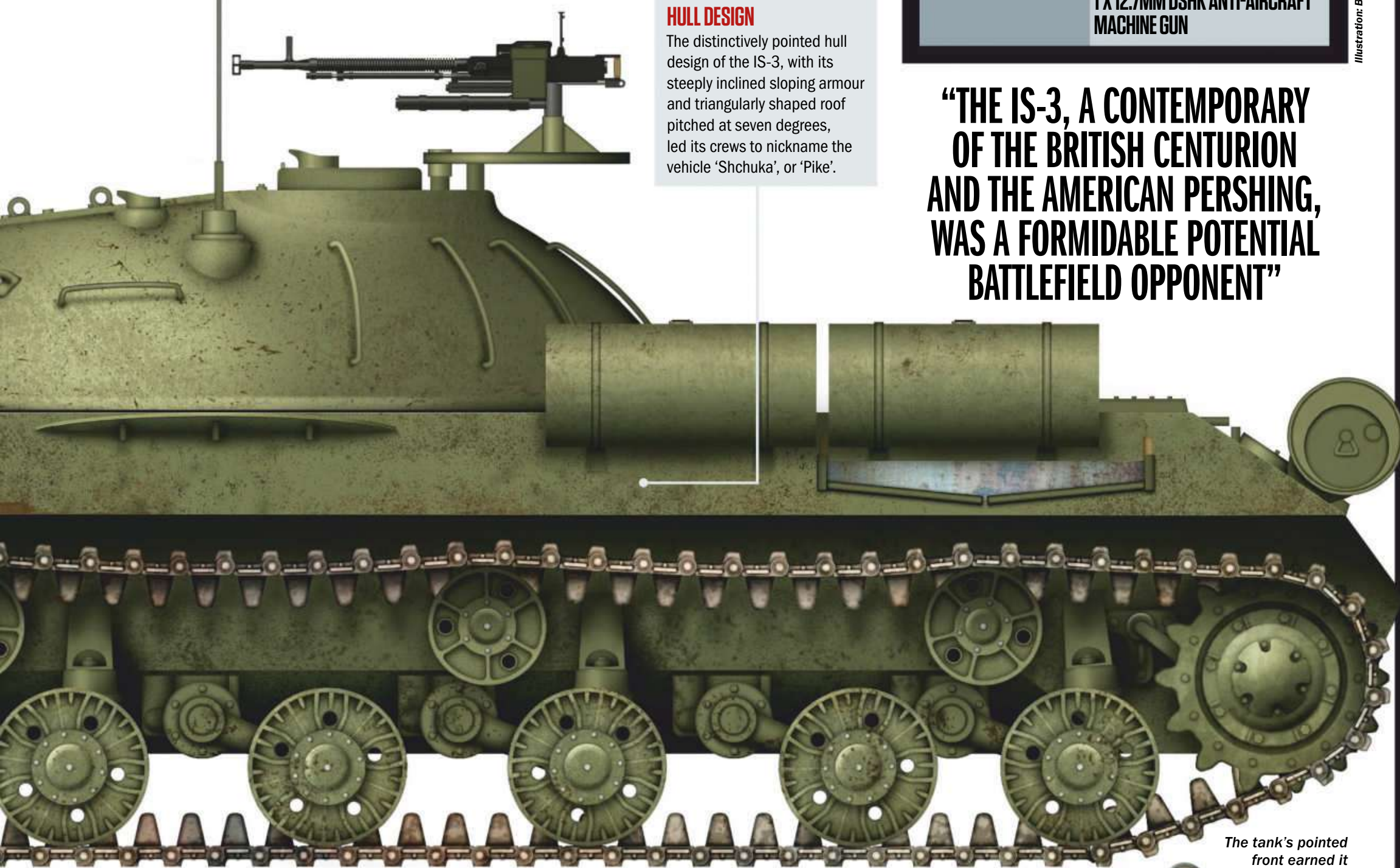
IS-3 HEAVY TANK

COMMISSIONED:	1945
ORIGIN:	SOVIET UNION
LENGTH:	9.85M (32.3FT)
RANGE:	150KM (93MI.) ROAD; 120KM (75MI.) CROSS-COUNTRY
SPEED:	37KM/H (23 MPH)
ENGINE:	V-2-IS V-12 DIESEL POWERPLANT GENERATING 447KW OR 600 BHP
CREW:	4
ARMOUR:	FRONTAL 200MM GUN MANTLET 201MM TURRET 201MM
PRIMARY WEAPON:	122MM D25-T CANNON
SECONDARY WEAPON:	2 X 7.62MM DT MACHINE GUNS; 1 X 12.7MM DSHK ANTI-AIRCRAFT MACHINE GUN

HULL DESIGN

The distinctively pointed hull design of the IS-3, with its steeply inclined sloping armour and triangularly shaped roof pitched at seven degrees, led its crews to nickname the vehicle 'Shchuka', or 'Pike'.

“THE IS-3, A CONTEMPORARY OF THE BRITISH CENTURION AND THE AMERICAN PERSHING, WAS A FORMIDABLE POTENTIAL BATTLEFIELD OPPONENT”



The tank's pointed front earned it the nickname 'Shchuka', which translates as 'Pike'



The angular forward section of the IS-3 hull



The heavy tank impressed Western observers when it was unveiled in 1945



Image: Wiki / PD / Alf Van Beem

Illustration: Battlefield Design

“THE TANK-MOUNTED GUN WAS ADAPTED FROM THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL MODEL 1931/37 A19 FIELD ARTILLERY PIECE”

A unique angle on the mammoth 122mm D25-T main gun



© Getty

ARMAMENT

The primary armament of the IS-3 was the lethal 122mm D25-T gun, featuring a two-chamber muzzle brake and horizontal semiautomatic breech. The tank-mounted gun was adapted from the highly successful Model 1931/37 A19 field artillery piece. In the autumn of 1943, a design team led by Fyodor Petrov tested the armoured configuration, and the weapon was installed in the IS-2 by the end of the year. The gun's large two-piece shells required assembly, which slowed the rate of fire to three rounds per minute and restricted the ammunition supply to only 28 rounds.



Proven in battle, the 122mm Model 1931/37 A-19 artillery piece was adapted to the Stalin series of tanks as the D25-T

© Alamy

DESIGN

Nicknamed the 'Pike' by its crews due to its welded, triangular frontal armour, the Soviet IS-3 heavy tank represented several design improvements over its predecessor, the IS-2. Incorporating a hull of rolled steel plating that maximized slope while presenting a narrower frontal area that reduced exposure to enemy fire, the IS-3 also featured a significantly rounded and flattened turret. Intended to decrease the silhouette of the large armoured vehicle, the turret design restricted deployment in the hull-down position and further impeded crew operations in the cramped interior.

The IS-3's original V-2-IS engine was considered to be underpowered for such a large tank



Image: Wiki / PD / Mil.ru

Design features that made the IS-3 heavy tank easily distinguishable, including hull and turret innovations, are prominent in this museum piece



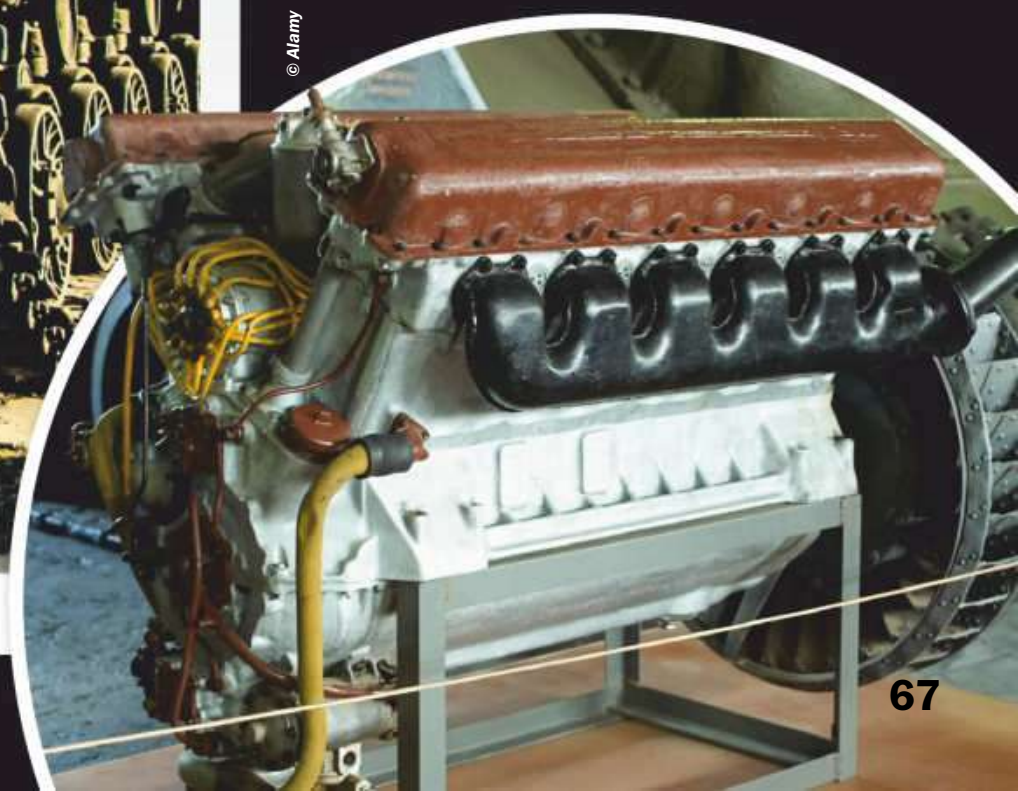
© Alamy

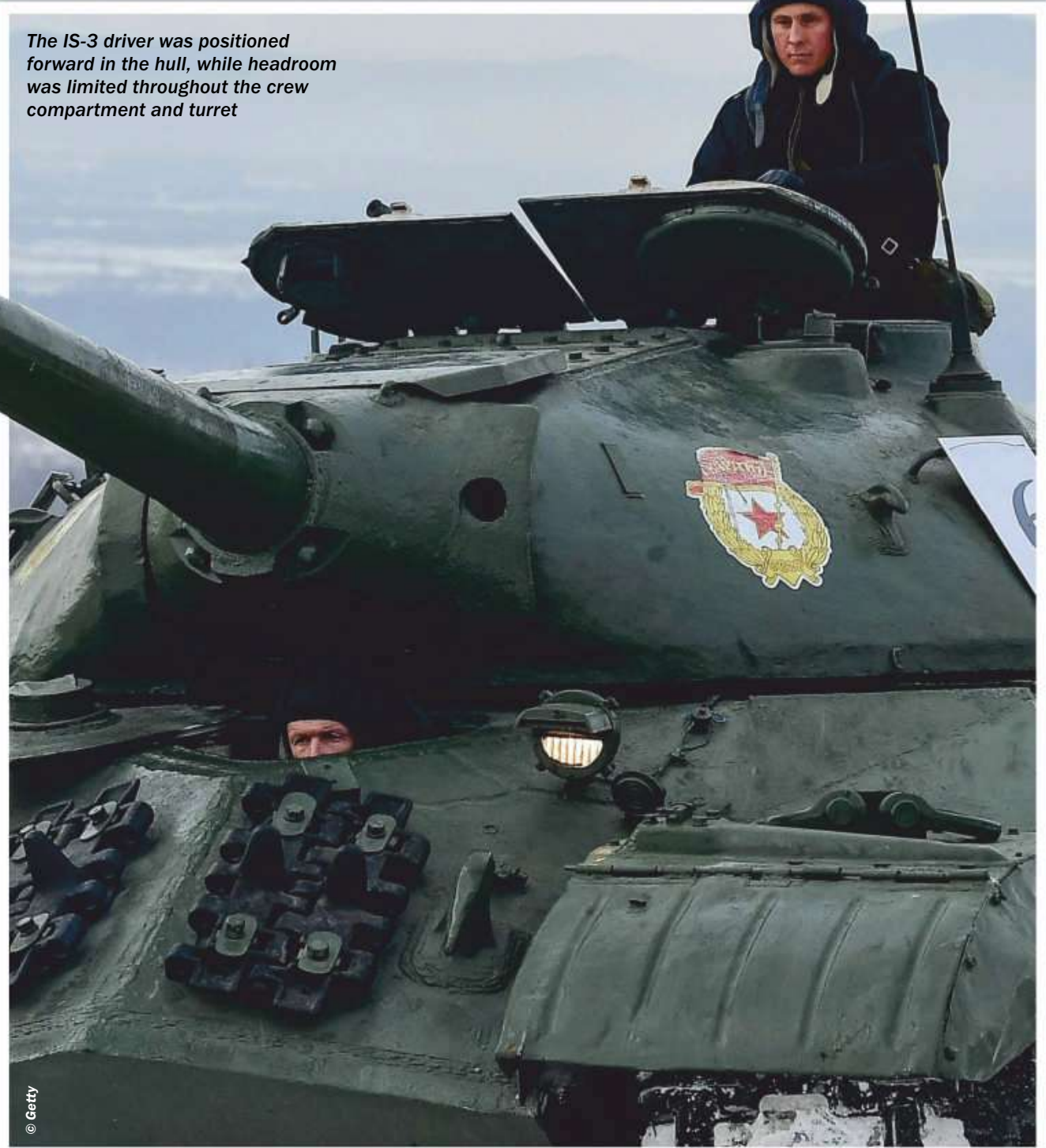
ENGINE

The IS-3 was powered by a 12-cylinder, four-stroke V-2-IS diesel engine generating 600bhp and a top speed of 37km/h (23mph). Designed at the Kharkiv Locomotive Factory by a team of engineers under the direction of Konstantin Chelpan, the engine has been criticized as insufficient for the 46-ton heavy tank. It proved particularly susceptible to breakdowns in the heat of the desert, while the accompanying transmission was equally unreliable. By 1948, the V-2-IS had been replaced in the improved IS-3M with the B-54K-IC diesel powerplant.

This example of a V-2 series diesel engine is on exhibit at the Kubinka Tank Museum in Russia

© Alamy





The IS-3 driver was positioned forward in the hull, while headroom was limited throughout the crew compartment and turret

INTERIOR

As with other Soviet tanks, the IS-3 crew compartment was characteristically cramped. The rounded and flattened turret, however, was so restrictive that it prevented the breech of the 122mm D25-T main gun from fully pivoting on its vertical axis or depressing completely. Although the commander could rotate the turret with manual controls, the required assembly of the two-piece 122mm shells prior to firing was laborious within its confines. While the driver was positioned forward in the hull, the three other crewmen were housed within the tight turret.

The cramped crew compartment and flattened turret of the IS-3 restricted the operation of the 122mm D25-T main weapon

SERVICE HISTORY

Incorporating an improved armour configuration and a flattened turret that became the hallmark of future Soviet tank designs, the IS-3 was developed in late-1944 by engineers at Soviet Experimental Plant No. 100 and the Chelyabinsk Kirov Plant Design Bureau as an upgrade to the IS-2. Only small numbers were completed in 1945, and mechanical issues ended its brief production run at 2,311 in 1946.

The IS-3's combat service includes the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and the Czechoslovakian uprising in 1968. Following its refit to the IS-3M in the early 1950s, the Egyptian Army acquired at least 100 of these, deploying them during the 1967 Six-Day War with Israel. While its armour was effective against enemy fire, several were destroyed, and inexperienced Egyptian crews abandoned a number of IS-3M tanks intact. The IS-3 equipped the armoured forces of numerous Soviet Bloc countries, and as recently as 2014 an aged IS-3 was pressed into service by Russian-backed rebels during fighting in Ukraine.

© Alamy

Image: Wiki / PD / ShinePhantom



Participating in a military parade, Israeli soldiers man an IS-3M tank captured during the 1967 Six-Day War with Egypt



“THE IS-3’S COMBAT SERVICE INCLUDES THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION IN 1956 AND THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN UPRISING IN 1968”

A destroyed IS-3 sits abandoned beside a burned-out building in Budapest. The tank’s performance in Hungary was disappointing

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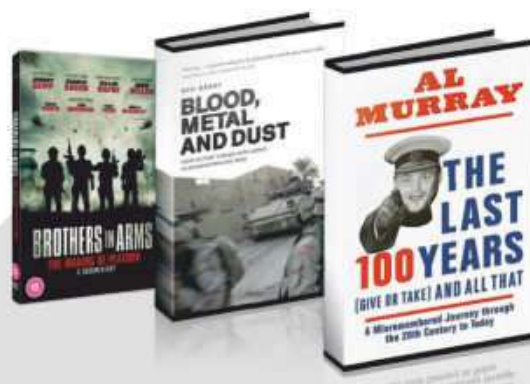
74 BURIED AMONG KINGS

The National Army Museum is commemorating the Unknown Warrior's burial with a new exhibition



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WWI this month:
January, 1914



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Our pick of the latest books
and films



82

Henry VIII's Siege of Boulogne
battle armour



WWII THIS MONTH...

JANUARY 1941

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, History of War will be taking a look at some of the key events from each month of the conflict

TOBRUK CAPTURED

After the successful opening stages of Operation Compass, the Italian 10th Army was pushed back into Libya. The fortified port of Tobruk was strategically vital for any further offensive into western Libya, and on 22 January the Italian garrison there surrendered to Australian and British forces. Over 25,000 Italians were captured. Tobruk became the primary objective of Erwin Rommel, who would arrive in North Africa the following month.

“THE ALLIES CAPTURED OVER 25,000 ITALIANS AT TOBRUK. THE PORT BECAME THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF ERWIN ROMMEL, WHO WOULD ARRIVE IN NORTH AFRICA THE FOLLOWING MONTH”



© Alamy

FIRST FLIGHT OF THE LANCASTER

Taking off from Woodford, Manchester, the Avro Type 683 Manchester III – later renamed the Lancaster – began its maiden flight on 9 January, 1941. The flight took place just weeks after gaining approval from the Air Ministry, and by October the same year the first bombers off the assembly line would be taking part in offensive operations.

EAST AFRICAN PROMISE

A Commonwealth and Ethiopian convoy, pictured with an antiquated armoured car, heads towards Italian-occupied East Africa. During what was also known as the Abyssinian campaign, British, Commonwealth and Ethiopian troops carried out a three-pronged attack against Italian-occupied territory in the region. This saw offensives in the north from Sudan, in the south from Kenya and South Africa, and from across the Gulf of Aden into Somaliland.



EIRE UNDER ATTACK

Despite its official neutrality during the war, the republic was attacked several times by the Luftwaffe during 1941. In the early hours of 2 January the first of such attacks took place when the Terenure area of south Dublin was bombed. The city was bombed again the following day, despite anti-aircraft crews firing warning rounds towards the German aircraft.



MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Visit Berwick-upon-Tweed's fortifications, the Royal Navy's museum for munitions and the National Army Museum's tribute to the Unknown Warrior

Buried Among Kings

The National Army Museum is commemorating the Unknown Warrior's burial with a new exhibition

Over a hundred years ago, an anonymous soldier was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, to honour the many thousands of servicemen, known and unknown, who made the ultimate sacrifice. Now the National Army Museum (NAM) presents *Buried Among Kings: The Story of the Unknown Warrior*, a collaborative effort with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Westminster Abbey, Royal Collection Trust and the Western Front Association. *Buried Among Kings* tells the story of this symbolic memorial, using objects, paintings, photography and personal testimony, placing the Unknown Warrior in the context of WWI by exploring the origins of the concept, selection process, poignant burial ceremony and his global legacy to the present day.

The exhibition pays special attention to the selection of the Unknown Warrior, a process that was shrouded in secrecy and remains much disputed to this day. Key accounts are displayed alongside the bible carried by Chaplain George Kendall during the selection process as well as a copy of the secret orders given to Captain Albert Fisher.

Also on display for the first time is a fragment of the original wooden Cenotaph that was erected during 1919-20 before it was permanently established as Britain's national war memorial. Frank O Salisbury's large-scale painting *The Passing of the Unknown Warrior* forms the centre of the exhibition and has been lent to the NAM by Queen Elizabeth II from the Royal Collection. It highlights the procession of

The coffin of the Unknown Warrior is borne in a wagon with a guard of Allied soldiers at Boulogne, France, 10 November 1920



the Unknown Warrior through London to its burial ceremony, which was led by the Queen's grandfather King George V. Other items that are displayed include the funeral service paper, an entry ticket to the burial and a letter from Prime Minister David Lloyd George thanking the Dean of Westminster for the service.

The final section of the exhibition looks at the legacy and shifting attitudes towards the Unknown Warrior. In the years immediately following WWI, the United States and other Allied nations, including Belgium and Italy, created their own Unknown Soldier monuments as commemorations to their war dead. Photographs of grave sites around the world show the magnitude of the concept and the enduring legacy of WWI on our ideas of shared sacrifice and the tragedy of war.

Images: NAM and Allstair Fern



Above: A ticket to the funeral of the Unknown Warrior
The grave of the Unknown Warrior is located at the far western end of the nave of Westminster Abbey. Since 1920, heads of states from over 70 countries have laid wreaths in his memory

The exhibition is open at the NAM in Chelsea, London, and runs until 14 February 2021 with opening times of Tuesday-Sunday, 10.30am-3.30pm. Admission is free but due to the Covid-19 pandemic tickets must be booked online in advance at nam.ac.uk

Mighty Detonations

Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower is Hampshire's dedicated centre for telling the story of the Royal Navy's heavy weapons

Situated in the former Royal Naval armaments depot in Priddy's Hard, Gosport, Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower is an award-winning museum. The armaments depot buildings date from the 18th century, and located inside these original structures are historic displays that describe the lives of those who worked in Priddy's Hard and the weapons they created. Alongside developments in munition technology, the museum tells a human story of the designers, makers and seamen who worked on armaments over the centuries.

Visitors can listen to first-hand accounts of munition workers who dealt with dangerous materials and the dramatic retelling of warfare in the field. Exhibits range from the 18th-21st centuries, with artefacts including a Victorian RBL 20-pounder Armstrong gun and a WWII QF 4-inch Mk XVI naval gun. Post-war examples of large naval weapons include the Exocet, Sea Dart and Sea Wolf missiles as well as a 4.5-inch Mark 8 naval gun. Other aspects of naval warfare are represented by displays of mines, torpedoes and various surface weapons systems.



A display of missiles points at visitors in the museum's buildings at Priddy's Hard

Explosion is part of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, with visitors being able to buy an Ultimate Explorer Ticket to explore the Gosport museum before visiting the attractions at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. However, a visit to the Explosion Museum must be booked separately online from a visit to the Historic Dockyard due to the temporary closure of the Waterbus Service.

For more information visit: nmrn.org.uk

The ruins of the White Wall at Berwick



Berwick's Battlements

England's northernmost town has significant defences that date back to its time as a battleground during centuries of Anglo-Scottish warfare

A historically contentious town on the Anglo-Scottish border, Berwick-upon-Tweed was central to many wars between England and Scotland for hundreds of years. From the 12th century it changed hands more than a dozen times between the English and Scottish crowns before it was permanently captured for England in 1482. Now part of the county of Northumberland, Berwick's eventful military past is reflected in both its castle and impressive bastioned town defences.

Visitors can see the remains of the medieval Scottish-built Berwick Castle that overlooks the River Tweed, but even more striking are the town walls. Largely constructed during reign of Elizabeth I, the ramparts were built in an Italian style to withstand artillery and are the only surviving fortifications of their kind in England. Visitors can traverse along a 2.4km circular walk along the walls that surround the historic town.

It is recommended to start the walk at the castle, which is adjacent to Berwick's railway station. There are then brown signs for the walls that can be accessed at several points. Detailed interpretation boards are located at key points along the walk that explain the history and purpose of the defences. A map is also available at certain points, including the barracks, which has toilet facilities and a gift shop that sells drinks and snacks.

For more information visit: english-heritage.org.uk

REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history book and film releases

BROTHERS IN ARMS THE MAKING OF PLATOON, A DOCUMENTARY

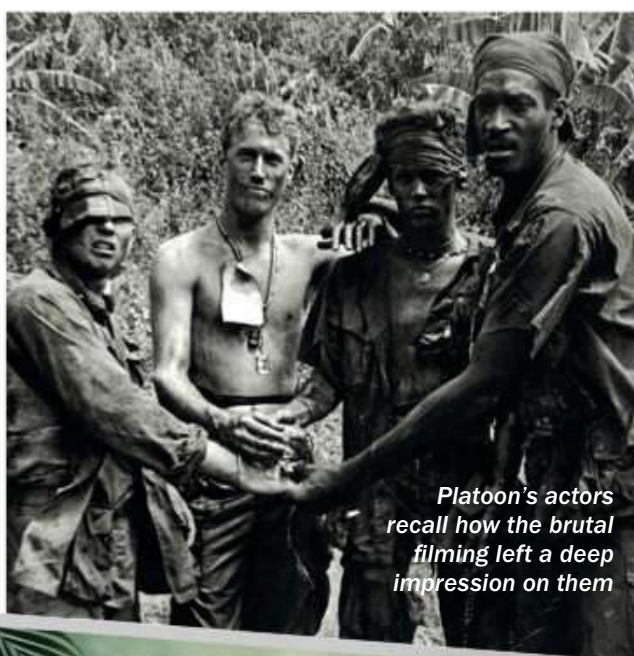
Director: Paul Sanchez **Narration:** Charlie Sheen **Released:** Out Now

In December 1986, the low-budget, non-union film *Platoon* made its debut in theatres across the United States. While some doubted that the gut-wrenching story of a US Army unit in the crucible of combat in Vietnam would generate much interest, the movie was a sensation. Release in the UK and the Philippines followed in March 1987, and *Platoon* easily eclipsed its \$6 million price tag with revenues of more than \$128 million. Critically acclaimed, the movie won four Academy Awards: Best Picture, Best Director for Oliver Stone, Best Film Editing, and Best Sound.

Thirty-five years later, *Brothers In Arms*, a documentary on the making of the landmark film that reached number 83 in the American Film Institute's 100 Years...100 Movies poll is now available digitally on demand and on DVD. Originally released in 2018, *Brothers In Arms* features cast members recounting vignettes from the 54 gruelling days of filming on location in the Philippines in February 1986. Thirty-three young actors, few of whom had previous credits in any substantive roles, found the experience to be life-changing and forged a bond that survives to this day.

Narrated by Charlie Sheen (lead role as Chris Taylor), others including Willem Dafoe (Sergeant Elias), Tom Berenger (Sergeant Barnes) and Johnny Depp (Lerner) recall the physical and emotional journey vividly. The film (running time 88 minutes) is directed by Paul Sanchez, who played the character Doc. Dafoe remembers opening the curtains of his Manila hotel room to the spectacle of Philippine Army tanks rolling down the street amid the overthrow of President Ferdinand Marcos, which almost forced the cancellation of the project. Depp calls the experience "the best time in the world and the worst time in the world".

Striving for realism, director Stone engaged retired US Marine Corps Captain Dale Dye to shape the young actors into a functioning Army rifle platoon. The training was rigorous, and Dafoe fell ill while trekking through the jungle. For two weeks, the actors lived like soldiers in the field, digging foxholes, eating Army-issue



Platoon's actors recall how the brutal filming left a deep impression on them

MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), and getting very little sleep as blank rifle rounds crackled in the darkness around them.

Soon, they took on the look and feel of men in a war zone, familiar with their weapons and responding naturally to orders. The subsequent combat sequences are intense. "You didn't have to act your ass off!" relates John C McGinley (Sergeant Red O'Neill).

When a pyrotechnic detonated too close to Sheen, who had been to the Philippines with his father Martin Sheen during the filming of the 1979 epic *Apocalypse Now*, the young actor was rendered semiconscious and "drooling". Moments later, Dye appeared on the scene and remarked, "That's why we continue to smoke."

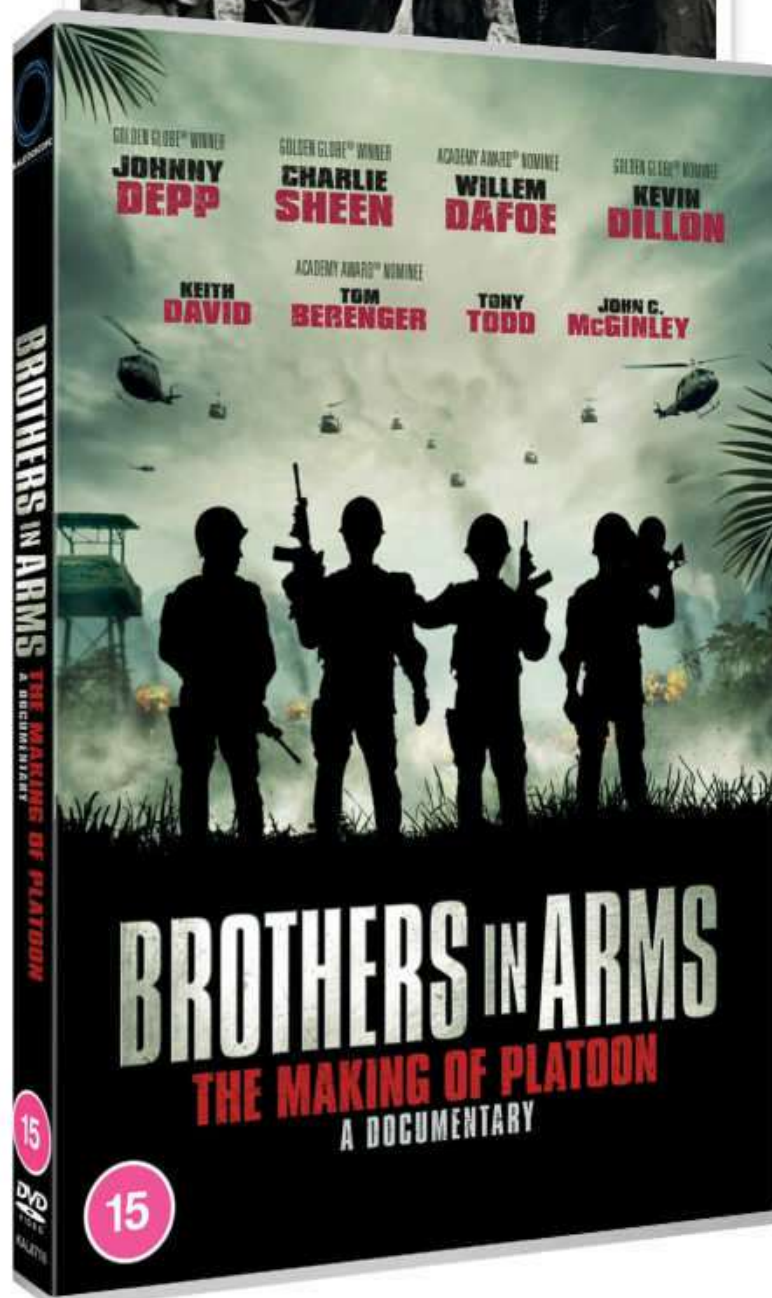
Dye recalls that actors whose characters were killed during the film were sent home on a plane the next day. He comments, "Berenger said, 'That feels weird doesn't it?' and I said, 'Yeah, it feels like we lost one.'"

"THE ACTORS LIVED LIKE SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD"

The controversial Stone, a decorated Vietnam combat veteran, spent years seeking financial backing for *Platoon*, but most studios were reluctant to invest in a project about the deeply unpopular war. His passion for realism and temperamental directing alienated cast members, who tell stories of his difficult demeanour but applaud the dedication that produced a film that many veterans of the conflict acknowledge as remarkably and at times disturbingly accurate.

While *Brothers In Arms* has been criticised as little more than a trip down memory lane for those who participated, there is no doubt that the experience profoundly affected each actor. Stone, however, is noticeably absent, as is Forest Whitaker (Big Harold).

Nevertheless, this documentary is intriguing for those who enjoy hearing the inside story. **MH**



THE NIGHT PORTER

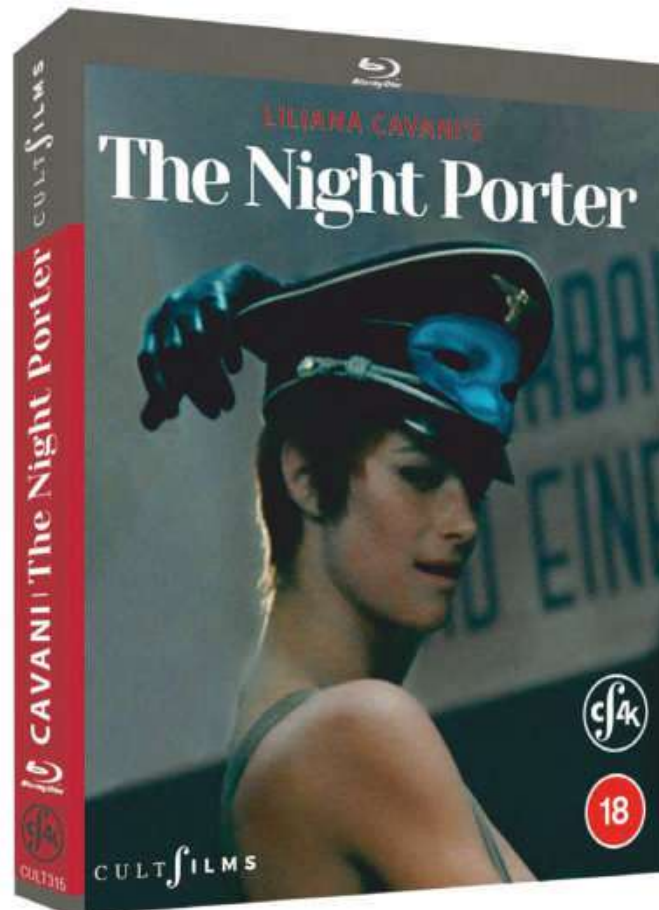
AS THE INFAMOUS CULT CLASSIC RECEIVES A NEW RELEASE, DOES IT RETAIN ITS POWER TO SHOCK AND PROVOKE?

Director: Liliana Cavani **Publisher:** CultFilms **Price:** £16.50 **Released:** Out Now

Originally released in 1974, *The Night Porter* is a controversial examination of Nazism intended to shock and provoke. Dismissed at the time, critic Roger Ebert stated that the film was “a despicable attempt to titillate us by exploiting memories of persecution and suffering”, while *The New York Times* declared: “Let us now consider a piece of junk.” Yet, like the past that haunts its narrative, the film refuses to fade away. Now, *The Night Porter* has been the subject of a lavish 4K restoration by CultFilms, supervised by director Liliana Cavani herself.

The film follows Max (Dirk Bogarde), a Nazi hiding in 1950s Vienna and working as the night porter in a hotel. Desperate to move on from the war, he’s a member of a group of ex-Nazis who ruthlessly seek out and destroy any evidence of their atrocities. However, conflicts arise when he re-encounters Lucia (Charlotte Rampling), who was a wartime prisoner of Max, and the two begin a sadomasochistic relationship.

The role of Max was a controversial one for Bogarde who, as a Captain in the British Army during WWII, was at the liberation of Belsen in



underlying rage, who sees nothing but futility in his colleagues’ ‘fake trials’ held to make them confront their own actions. He wishes only to forget, but when confronted with Lucia he finds himself compelled to be with her, his past proving inescapable.

It’s this theme which is the core of the film. Cavani uses the camera as a cold observer, events are shown but judgement is never passed. Max is clearly an appalling character and a vicious monster, yet he serves as our romantic lead. Lucia is shown to have a glamorous life as the wife of an important conductor, yet the film makes no moral comment when she enters into her troubling affair with Max. These are characters who, controversially or not, are drawn to one another.

Even almost 50 years later, *The Night Porter* remains a distressing and uncomfortable watch. Not one for the faint of heart, beneath the uncompromising imagery and difficult subject matter is an exploration of the aftermath of war. Whether it’s Max and Lucia, or the ex-Nazis desperately seeking to erase history (yet still proclaiming themselves proud soldiers of the Third Reich), not a single character can escape the past. All are haunted and, ultimately, doomed by their memories of the war. Whether you agree or disagree with Cavani’s handling of the subject, *The Night Porter* raises disturbing questions about how we deal with the memory of the Second World War. For that reason alone it deserves to be remembered as a cult masterpiece. **CM**

Former Nazi Max (Dirk Bogarde) and Lucia (Charlotte Rampling) embark on a shocking affair

1944. “I went through some of the huts,” the actor would later describe, “and there were tiers and tiers of rotting people.” Bogarde reportedly never discussed his wartime experiences with Cavani, yet we know from memoirs and interviews that they continued to haunt him. Which begs the question, why Max? Bogarde plays the role as a man seething with



BLOOD, METAL & DUST

HOW VICTORY TURNED INTO DEFEAT IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ

Author: Ben Barry **Publisher:** Osprey Publishing **Price:** £25.00

Through the harsh lens of historical retrospect a quarter-century of Western military and political involvement, regime change, nation building, counter-terrorism operations and investment of lives and treasure in Iraq and Afghanistan must be declared a strategic failure.

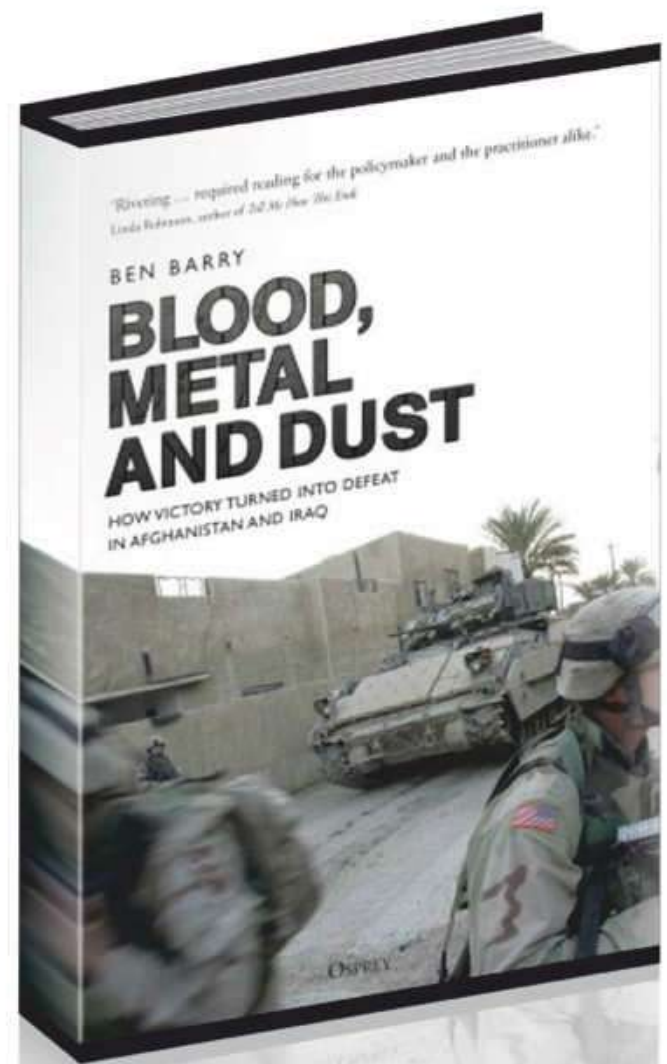
So asserts author Ben Barry in his recently released book *Blood, Metal And Dust: How Victory Turned Into Defeat In Afghanistan And Iraq* (Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2020). Barry also places the lion's share of responsibility for this failure at the feet of President George W Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose leadership and governmental lieutenants were inadequate in their vision and delivery of effective policies that might have resulted in lasting peace and security in the region. While providing a scathing indictment of Bush and Blair, Barry further critiques their successors, who in large part perpetuated their own legacies of ineptitude.

Barry, himself a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), veteran officer of the British Army, and author of several well-received books on military strategy, penned the Army's analysis of the post-conflict stabilisation effort in Iraq and continues to write with the clarity of an expert, this time for a more general readership. Drawing upon a trove of documents, reports and other materials, Barry also acknowledges the contributions of numerous IISS colleagues, among them

retired General Lord David Richards and retired Lieutenant General HR McMaster.

After exhaustive research, travel to the region and years of personal experience, the author determines: "The bleak conclusion is that for all the blood and money expended since 9/11, the US and its allies did not win the war in Iraq and have failed in the longer term to achieve almost all of their objectives in Afghanistan." The clear victor, he says, is Iran. However, Barry is quick to validate the heroism and sacrifice of the US-led Coalition forces and their partners, foremost among these the armed forces of the United Kingdom, in winning many tactical victories, toppling the despotic Saddam Hussein, and displacing the terroristic Taliban.

The author sets the stage in addressing the evolution of the post-World War II Western worldview and advances in military technology. He then plunges into the response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 with Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan and the miscalculated threat of weapons of mass destruction that initiated Operation Iraqi Freedom. A long, arduous journey subsequently saw difficult fighting, destabilisation of governments, the determined insurgency that ensued in Iraq and the tenacious resilience of the Taliban in Afghanistan. None of those who bear responsibility for the strategic squandering of heroes' lives and millions of dollars are



spared, while the author provides detailed analysis of the US, Coalition and NATO tactical battlefield triumphs that fostered opportunities which were eventually lost.

This lengthy work on a timely and sensitive topic is presented thoroughly, with unflinching prose and keen insight. Richly complemented with numerous maps and photographs, *Blood, Metal And Dust* not only maintains the Osprey tradition of setting a standard among military publishers, but also measures up handsomely to the author's previous contributions to contemporary military thought and analysis. **MH**

THE LAST 100 YEARS AND ALL THAT

AN ENTERTAINING JAUNT THROUGH 100 YEARS OF HISTORY

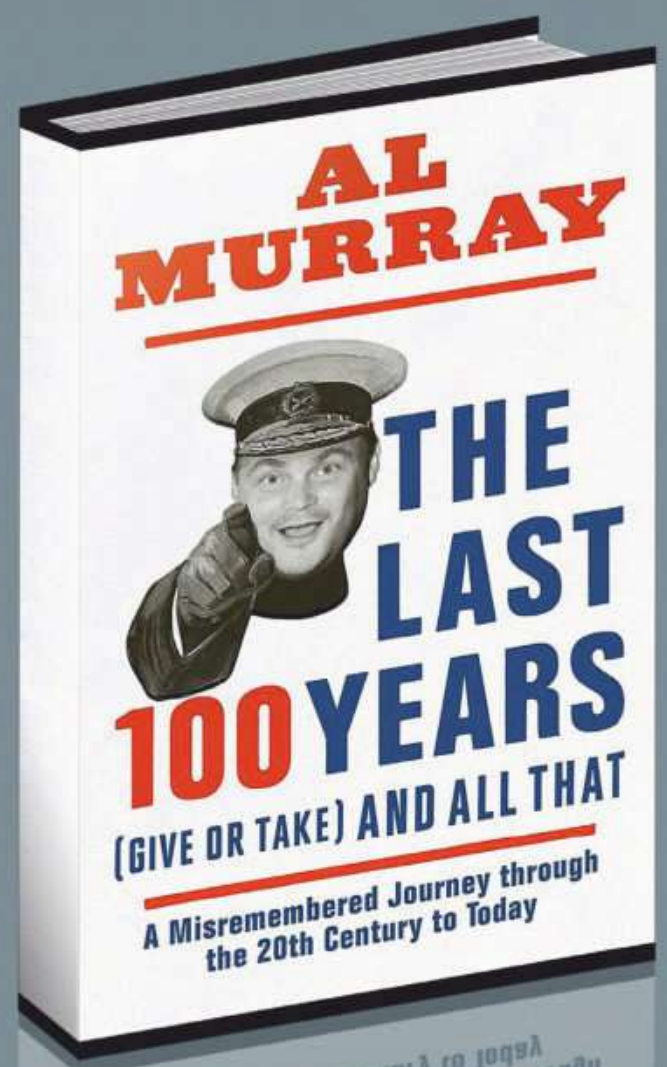
Author: Al Murray **Publisher:** Quercus **Price:** £14.99

To those who know Al Murray as his Pub Landlord alter ego, *The Last 100 Years And All That* might come as something of a surprise. Yet Murray studied Modern History at Oxford in his pre-Pub Landlord days, and his passion for the past means that this is more than just a celebrity stocking filler.

The title of the book is a nod to the 1930 classic *1066 And All That*, and just as that book managed to balance irreverent humour with genuine historical insight Murray also carries off that delicate balancing act. Billed as a "whistle-stop tour of Britain since 1914", the book actually concludes in 1999, while its scope spans the globe and reaches all the way to the Moon.

How much readers really enjoy this book may well depend on their response to Murray's particular brand of humour, not to mention its conversational tone. Yet that tone feels just right and though there are moments of sheer absurdity – Benedict Cumberbatch creating the Enigma machine springs to mind – the history is solid. It's not quite the collection of lesser-known vignettes that the jacket promises, though, and for every intriguing as de there are plenty of big ticket moments, from two World Wars to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

There is much to enjoy and *The Last 100 Years And All That* will serve as a wonderful primer for casual readers looking to dip their toes into the history of the 20th century. **CC**



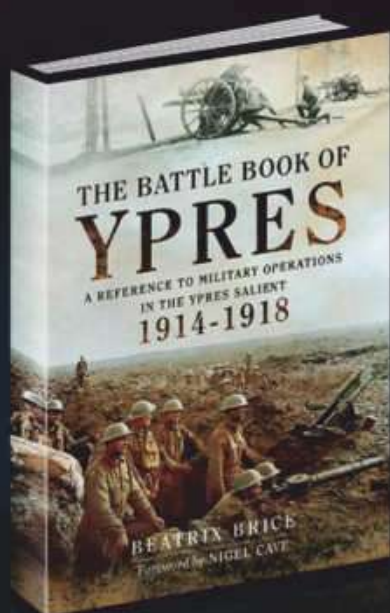
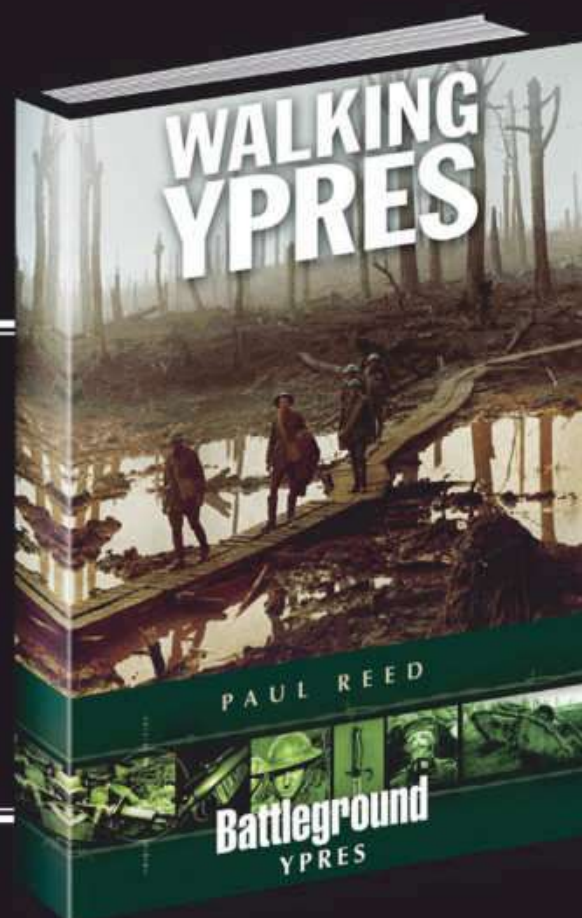
YPRES

From the outbreak of the First World War this battlefield saw several offensives and some of the bloodiest fighting of the conflict

WALKING YPRES

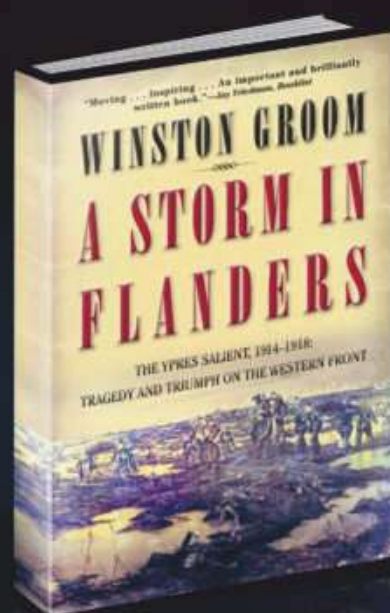
Paul Reed

A respected military historian and battlefield guide, Reed takes us on a tour of the battlefields around the Ypres Salient, including the town itself and the key landmarks of the battle ground as it appears today. Including photographs as reference points, this is an ideal companion for anyone wishing to explore the battlefield in person.



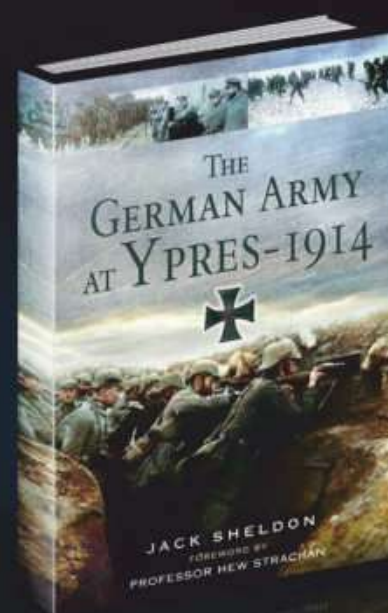
The Battle Book of Ypres *Beatrix Brice*

Originally published in 1927, this reference guide provides a chronological account of each stage of the battles, from 1914-18. Also included are a thorough index of units involved at the various points in the battles, as well as an alphabetised reference guide to the many villages, woods, and other topographical landmarks used in first-hand accounts of the battles.



A Storm In Flanders *Winston Groom*

An award-winning novelist and author of *Forrest Gump*, adapted into the 1994 film, Groom was also an accomplished historical writer. Here he draws from dozens of diaries and first-hand accounts from combatants and civilians, using their testimony to give a sense of what it was like to live and fight through the four bloody years in the Ypres Salient.



The German Army At Ypres - 1914 *Jack Sheldon*

With research from German archives in Stuttgart and Munich, Sheldon here focuses on the First Battle of Ypres and the German regiments that took part. Also detailed are how British, French and Belgian forces managed to hold off the Germans in the opening months of the war.

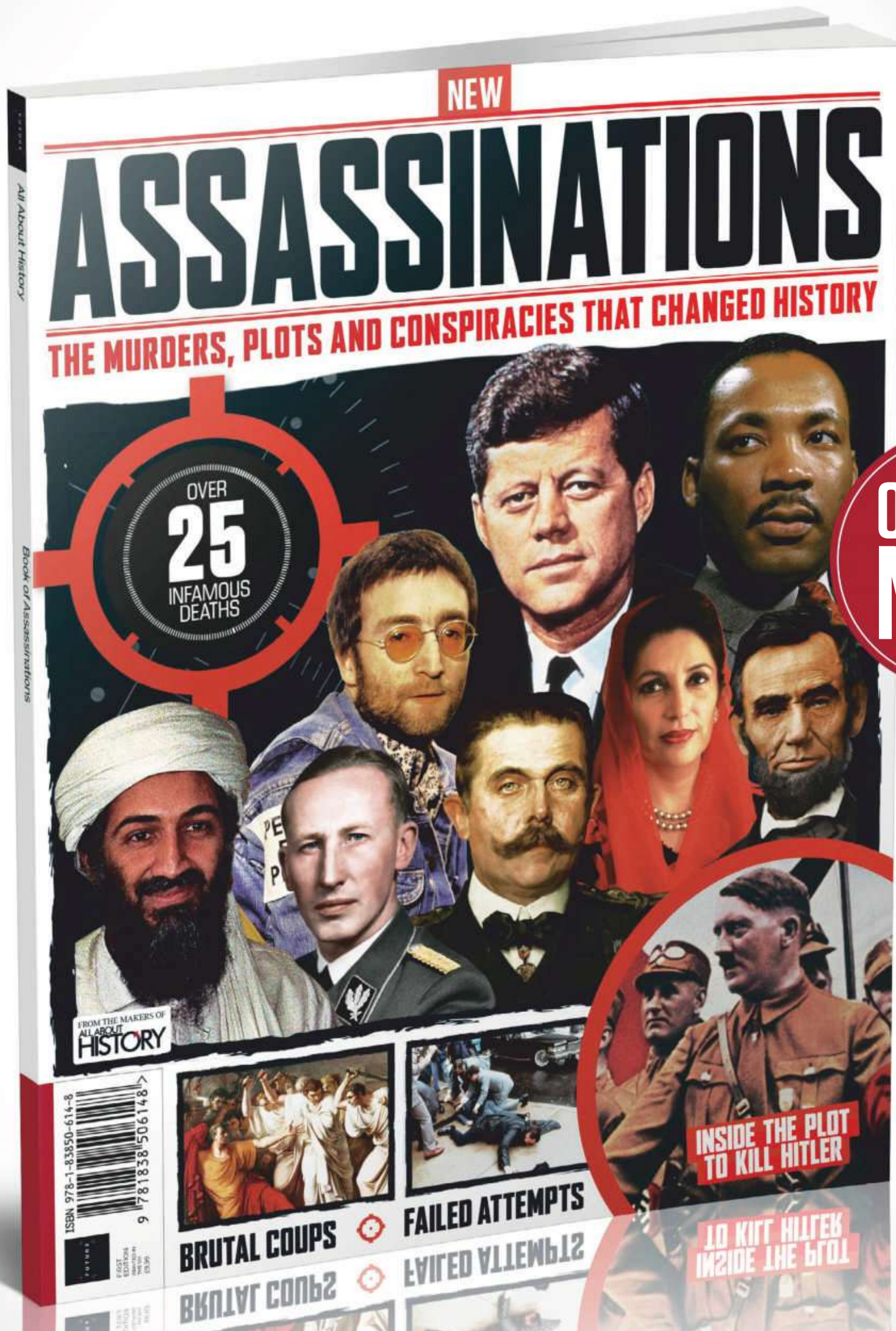


Great Battles: Ypres *Mark Connelly and Stefan Goebel*

With a deliberate multinational approach to the battles, here Connelly and Goebel address not only the physical impact of the conflict on the men and the very landscape, but also the way in which the battle is commemorated and retold by the many nations it affected.

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Photography

Alamy, Battlefield Design, Getty

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Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9060

ISSN 2054-376X

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HENRY VIII'S ARMOUR

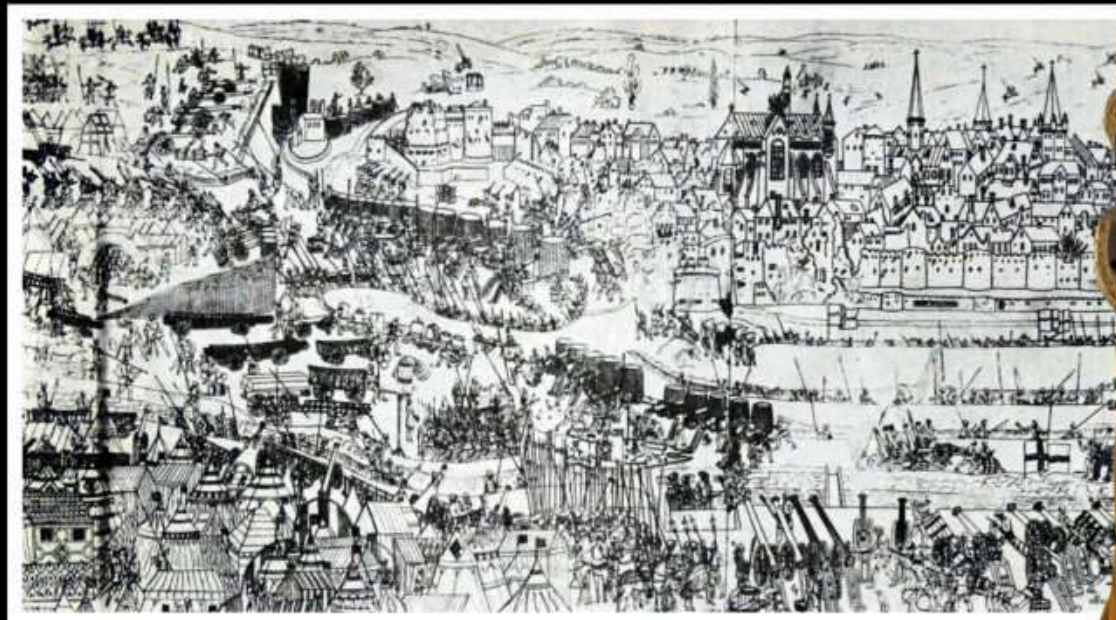
Towards the end of his reign, England's most famous king wore this Italian armoured suit during the Siege of Boulogne

Although Henry VIII (r.1509-47) is most famous for his six wives, he personally wanted to be remembered as a warrior. Casting himself as the spiritual successor to his predecessor and namesake Henry V, the king conducted several campaigns in France but with limited success. In 1544, he invaded France for the last time and invested the port of Boulogne for the first of two sieges. The English captured the city and held it for the rest of Henry's reign, although it was returned to France in 1550 after his death.

Although the sieges achieved little, Boulogne was probably Henry's greatest military success. He took personal command of the operations despite being obese and crippled with gout. His physical infirmities can be strikingly seen in this suit of armour that was worn by him during the campaign. Described as being "of Italian making", the suit was probably supplied to the king by a Milanese merchant who imported luxury goods into England. Its decorations are certainly Italian, with Renaissance-style patterns of foliage, putti and running dogs.

In practical terms, the suit is made of horizontal overlapping plates that are connected by rivets and internal leather straps to allow for flexibility. It was designed for both foot or mounted combat with a detachable reinforcing breastplate that could attach a lance-rest. What is fascinating about the suit is how well tailored it was for the king. Its appearance and fitting mean that it conspicuously conveys Henry's middle-aged health problems. There is even a sense that the overweight monarch would have had a slower gait thanks to his size and a painful leg ulcer.

Below: A contemporary engraving of the Siege of Boulogne depicting the city, castle and English camps of Henry VIII, Lord Admiral Lisle and Sir Anthony Browne



The armour was owned by the earls of Pembroke for centuries and was erroneously believed to have belonged to the 16th century French duke of Montmorency

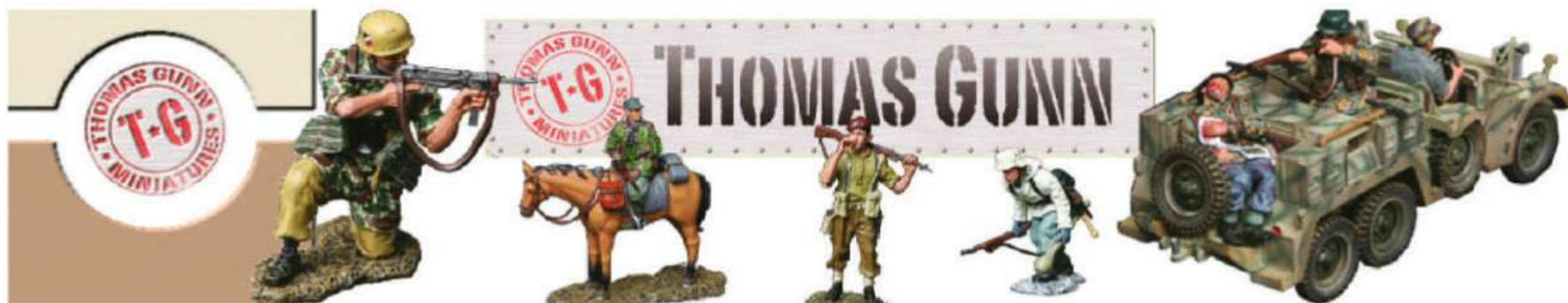


Image: Metropolitan Museum of Art

Henry VIII's armour is part of the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Known as The Met, the museum is the largest art museum in the United States and contains the popular Department of Arms and Armor.

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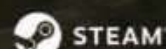
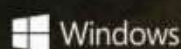
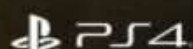
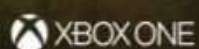
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